246.1
Se37

SEGNERI, PAOLO

FATHER SEGNERI'S

SENTIMENTI;

OR,

LIGHTS IN PRAYER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY K. G.

Edited, with a Preface,

BY FATHER GALLWEY, S.J.

246.1
LIBRARY
SE 37

LONDON:
BURNS AND OATES, PORTMAN STREET,
AND PATERNOSTER ROW.

1876.

48142

ALMA COLLEGE
LIBRARY

PREFACE.

FATHER PAUL SEGNERI, from whose spiritual note-book are taken these *Sentimenti,* now for the first time presented to English readers, was one of the most distinguished Jesuits of the seventeenth century. He was admired as a writer, as a preacher, and as a missioner, but most of all as an exemplary Religious. As a writer, he ranks among the classic authors of Italy, which is the more remarkable from the fact that his lot was cast in an age notorious for degeneracy in literature and a corrupted taste. Cardinal Wiseman, in his interesting *Recollections of the last Four Popes,* names Father Segneri as one of

three writers who escaped the prevalent infection, and "whose learning, piety, and ability, have made them standard authors in their various classes of ecclesiastical literature." In the pulpit also he had the grace to resist the taste for inflated rhetoric which was almost universal, and though blamed, as we are told, by those who thought that he was letting down the dignity of the pulpit, he continued through life, to look only to the good of his audience and to preach the Gospel truths, in sermons simple and intelligible, but always carefully prepared and forcibly enriched with pleasing illustrations, chiefly drawn from Holy Scripture and abounding with passages of remarkable eloquence. We are not, therefore, surprised to find that the blessing of heaven attended in a wonderful degree on the courses of sermons which he preached during the

missions which he gave in company with the holy Father Pinamonte. The chief praise, however, of Father Segneri, was the blameless and exemplary life which he lived as a Religious. Those who lived with him discovered a great resemblance to St. Aloysius in this that he united in his life in a very high degree the two graces of innocence and penance. Unlike, however, to St. Aloysius, he did not speedily come to the end of his religious career on earth. He entered the novice-ship at the early age of fourteen, before, as his biographers tell us, he had lost the white robe of baptism; and he continued during fifty-nine years to edify all, both by the innocence of his life and the severity with which he sought by penance to win grace for the souls of those for whom he preached and laboured. He died a holy death in Rome, at the close of the century (an. 1694).

This little volume of his *Sentimenti* or Lights in prayer we owe to the practice which St. Ignatius taught to all whom he formed to meditation in his Spiritual Exercises, of making a reflection after their meditations; that is to say, turning back on the work done to observe faults committed, and also to gather together the holy thoughts inspired from heaven, and to make thanksgiving for them. To this same practice we are indebted for a larger work of the same character as the *Sentimenti*, the *Memorial*, or Spiritual Diary of the Blessed Peter Faber, which after remaining hidden for three centuries has recently been brought to light, and forms so interesting a portion of Father Coleridges's Life of the newly Beatified.

Those who read the *Sentimenti*, will, I think, wish that Father Segneri had left behind him notes as copious as those of Blessed Peter Faber. Ever since I read

them many years ago, I have hoped that some one would find time to translate them into English, for this reason, among others, that they seem to me to contain great encouragement both to Religious men and women, and also to pious persons in the world, to overcome the difficulties that hinder success in meditation. For in the *Sentimenti* we not only see, I think, how Father Segneri meditates, but are attracted to follow his example, since we find in him the fulfilment of the promise, "To him who conquers I will give the hidden manna."* We cannot help noticing how from a few words, such as the opening words of the fiftieth Psalm, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy," which since childhood we have so often repeated, without attention, possibly, and without relish, he is enabled by the light

* Apoc. ii.

given to him to find much food, much entertainment, much comfort, strength and wisdom for his soul. And we begin to understand why it is that the Psalmist so often repeats such words as these, "The law of His mouth is good to me above thousands of gold and silver;" "Oh, how have I loved Thy law, O Lord, it is my meditation all the day;" "I have understood more than all my teachers, because Thy testimonies are my meditation." "How sweet are Thy words to my palate, more than honey to my mouth."*

All these passages, and many more which abound in Holy Writ, are only an unfolding of the idea expressed in the word of our Lord, that, "not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that cometh from God's mouth."† If we want weapons against sin, we learn

* Psalm cxviii. † St. Matt. iv.

from the practice of our Blessed Lord in the desert that words from Holy Scripture are as effective against Satan as the shepherd-boy's smooth pebbles from the brook against Goliah. Hence, the Holy Spirit, through the Psalmist, dictated this sentence, "Thy words I have hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee."* Or again, if we want some pleasant entertainment for our souls, need we turn to the newspapers, or periodicals, or works of fiction, or the drama? The Psalmist answers, "Men have told me their tales and fables, but they are not like Thy law O Lord."† Or must we take to sight-seeing or have recourse to sweet music. Ecclesiastes warns us not. For "the eye," he says, "is not contented with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."‡ But when holy men like

* Psalm cxviii. † *Ibid.*
‡ Eccles. i.

Father Segneri, are blessed as the disciples were on the road to Emmaus, and have our Lord near them opening the sense of Scripture to them, then their hearts are burning within them, and the hour of prayer is not tedious, but when it is ended their cry is still "remain with us, O Lord, remain;"* "It is good for us to be here."† And no wonder! For this is a foretaste of heaven; since the everlasting life of heaven is, as our Blessed Saviour has told us, made up of this, that there at last man knows "Thee the true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, Jesus Christ."‡ But, as our Lord said in sorrow, while He wept on Mount Olivet, "Jerusalem, these things are hidden from thy eyes." The inspired words of Scripture, so full of meaning, of consolation, and of power, lie lifeless on

* St. Luke xxiv. † St. Mark ix.
‡ St. John xvii.

the page, just as the wondrous works of creation, the stars, the plants, the waters and the rest stand silent and idle, like the glorious organ of some deserted church, till a breath from heaven comes to put a tongue into every word of Holy Writ, and every work of God's hand, that all may bless the Lord. May then the reading of this little volume, encourage us to win for ourselves by self-conquest, an increase of faith, and hope, and charity, that we may not live on with eyes that see not, and ears that do not hear, and hearts that cannot be warmed with that fire which our Saviour is ever striving to enkindle, from His Crib, from His Cross, from His Tomb, and from His Tabernacle.

If Father Segneri could visit us again, in this valley of tears, he would assuredly urge each of us not to grudge the price to be paid, but to adopt unhesitatingly the

advice of our Blessed Saviour, "I counsel thee to buy from me the fire-tried gold that thou mayst be rich."*

P. GALLWEY.

111, *Mount Street, London,*
Feast of Venerable Bede, 1875.

* Apoc. iii.

Father Segneri's Sentimenti.

INTRODUCTION.

THE autumnal vacation of the year 1660 was passing when I entered upon the usual course of spiritual exercises; and it seems that God waited for this moment to awaken me from my tepidity and languor in His holy service, which was so unsuited to my religious vocation. He deigned to open my mind, and to disclose to me the secrets of the most hidden truths, and above all He showed me the importance of eternity. From motives of fear my soul quickly passed to love, so that I felt myself burning with an ardent desire to sacrifice myself entirely to my Lord. It appeared to me that I heard an interior voice which said:

"I wish that we should love each other reciprocally." No more was needed to make me different from what I had been before; and I no longer had any thought either of myself or of the world, because my only aim was to correspond with the invitations that came to me from my God. I chose as the subject of my consideration that verse of David in the Seventy-sixth Psalm: "I said, Now have I begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High."* I applied myself, therefore, to a serious and absolute reform of my manner of living; and in the clear light which came to me from God, these five things were shown to me, as conformable to my state—*poverty, retirement, prayer, penance, and examination of conscience.* Therefore I chose prayer for my favourite occupation, and accordingly did not determine any special time for it; but besides the hour which by the rule of our Institute is passed in prayer in the morning, I gave to prayer all the remainder of the day, which

* Psalm lxxvi. 11.

was not filled up by my usual duties. Thus I went on till the 11th of December, when on the morning of that day, as I was engaged in this holy exercise, God in His mercy began to communicate to me those lights which I purpose to note down in their order in these pages, for my remembrance and for my profit.

1. I experienced in the prayer of this morning an extraordinary species of sweetness; not tears, at least not many, but such delight and such an inward peace as seemed to me better than tears, and which I cannot express except by this verse of David: "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God."* This idea, the *living* God, gave me great joy; that is, having a God within myself not dead, like the senseless divinities of the ancients, but seeing, acting, in fine, living.

I smiled in my heart, if I may so speak, at the goodness of this Lord, who

* Psalm lxxxiii. 3.

allows Himself to be so easily deceived by men. My God, enable me to express here this thought as I apprehended it. For Thou seest perfectly well that, although in this hour of prayer I may make a thousand purposes to do great things for Thy service, to give Thee all, to suffer all, to please Thee in all; nevertheless, I shall soon betray Thee, nor will this present day, perhaps, pass without my breaking my promise to Thee. And Thou, knowing this perfectly well, dost come, and almost counterfeit ignorance of me, and caress me in prayer, not according to that which Thou seest full well I shall be, but according to what in my fervour I tell Thee I wish to be. When should I ever act thus towards any one? If any one were now to make me a thousand promises, and I knew that though he made them sincerely, he would, when the time came, retract them and even turn traitor towards me, and join with my enemies to offend me, I should not feel at all disposed to caress

him for such promises, but should rather despise and abhor him. And Thou, my God, dost act so differently with me! To the infallible knowledge of the future Thou joinest the clear experience of the past. Thou knowest how many times I have made Thee similar promises, although I afterwards betrayed Thee; and still Thou dost only regard what I am, and never what I shall be. If this be not allowing Thyself almost to be deceived by Thy supreme goodness, what then is it? Oh, how well Thou didst say by Jeremias, "I called for my friends, but they deceived me."* That is to say, I have called those men my friends, and I have treated and feasted them as such, and they afterwards deceived me so grossly. Alas! my God, do not permit me to deceive Thee in the same way. Give me constancy, give me fidelity, so as rather to die a thousand times than deliberately to offend Thee even slightly. Yes, it shall be so, with Thy grace, my God.

* Lament. i. 19.

2. I have lately been very much disturbed by a temptation—which is this: when desiring, in prayer or at any other time, to offer myself to God as ready to suffer for His love any great trial whatsoever, and even to ask Him for it, the only thing that presented itself to me as an insuperable mortification was to forget the thread of my discourse in a sermon. At this thought my whole being remained in anxious dread: since on the one hand I felt myself obliged to accept everything promptly from the Divine hand; on the other I feared that this very resignation might be accepted in effect, and that God wished to try me in this manner: and so a great fear came upon me, which impeded me in the very act of speaking, and almost made me hesitate. I told it to the Spiritual Father as a temptation, and I have tried by his advice not to think of it, because God wills that I should apply myself to exercise my calling in the best manner I am able.

This morning the same temptation returned. I conquered myself by the Divine grace, and strove to convert fear into desire, and asked very earnestly that God would give me this public mortification on this very morning when I am to preach on a very solemn occasion in this city. This prayer clearly can do me no harm, because there is no longer fear, but desire; and in this consisted my former error. Fear robs us of our vigorous spirit; desire, never. Nor shall I on this account fail to use all possible diligence to acquit myself of my preaching in the best way I can. Nay precisely on account of the prayer I have made I must do so; because then, forgetting myself, I shall be certain that failure comes from God, and I shall remain perfectly satisfied; whereas, had I not used diligence, the fault would have been mine. And this is one of the principal reasons why St. Ignatius says we should use as much diligence as if God had not to help us. It seems to me

that by this act of generosity I conquered. Nor has anything whatsoever since presented itself to my mind which I did not seem to be ready to suffer for the love of God, by the favour of His grace. *Laus Deo.*

3. It seems to me that we ought to desire that the food which we receive from God in prayer should be like that given to Elias in order to reach the summit of Mount Horeb, that is, food of great strength. For the rest, whether it be savoury and sweet, or bread baked on the ashes, of little flavour to the palate, we should not care. Therefore it is not said of Elias that he walked in the *sweetness* of that food, but in the *strength** of that food. I made this reflection this morning, after having experienced for the last two days great dryness in prayer, my heart not finding in it the usual joy and satisfaction, though still the hour passed very quickly;

* 3 Kings xix. 8.

nor did I fail through God's mercy to shed many tears, but all produced by the grief I feel to see myself so miserable —looking on myself as a wretched little bird amidst the entanglement and the uncleanness of the nest, who wishes to take flight in order to reach God quickly, but feels he has no wings. Oh, with what affection did I again and again make acts of sorrow. "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?"* Thou wilt give them to me, my God, if it be Thy will, for Thou hast to do everything, and, indeed, it would be no small thing if I allowed Thee to act and did not stand in Thy way: so far am I from being able to do anything.

4. I perceived this morning that one of the principal reasons why God withdraws Himself from the soul in the manner described above, is to make it solicitous to see if there be not something in itself displeasing to Him: thus

* Psalm xli. 4.

to refine it and to purify it more perfectly. So I have examined myself now for three days, during which it seems to me I have been in the state described by David: "My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily, where is thy God?"* For, from this I passed to what comes immediately after: "These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me:" † and accordingly I almost poured out my whole soul before my eyes, without keeping anything hidden, in order to see if there might be anything in it, past or present, for which God might be displeased with me. I continue, it is true, all this time to speak with God in prayer as before, but it does not seem to me that He speaks with me. I hope I shall be able in the end to add also: "I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God." ‡ For the present I only run the risk of bringing on scrupulosity by this anxiety to

* Psalm xli. 4.

† Psalm xli. 5. ‡ Ibid. loc. cit.

see if there be anything in me displeasing God: for in other respects it seems to me that I have lately been even more watchful than usual over my ordinary failings.

5. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy." * There are on the part of God various degrees of mercy to sinners, such as David was. The first is to give them in this life, notwithstanding the injuries He receives from them, comforts, riches, honours, prosperity. He acts thus principally with those who will lose their souls. Still this is mercy: for He could at once let them perish instead of allowing them to enjoy themselves for some years in this way. The second degree of mercy is, when He does not wish to punish a sinner in the other life, but only in this: and therefore afflicts and torments him here very grievously. But the third degree of mercy, and it seems to me the greatest of all, is when God acts

* Psalm l. 1.

in this manner with the sinner although the sinner does not wish it, but laments, complains, and calls God cruel. Let me imagine myself back again in those moments in which I found myself subjected to some mortification which penetrated into my inmost soul. My God, how many complaints did I not in those days pour out in Thine ears! what did I not say! how many tears did I not shed! how many times did I not almost accuse Thee of cruelty, as if Thou wouldst not even deign to hear me! while at the same time Thou hadst absolutely withdrawn from my heart every consolation. How great, therefore, has been Thy mercy to me, in not having taken notice of my lamentations, in having, notwithstanding them, continued to treat me as my good required. How wonderful! By means of this mortification Thou didst save me from eternal pain, and prepare eternal glory for me: and I complained of this as if it were the greatest misfortune. What wouldst Thou then be

forced to say to me at such a time if Thou wert to treat me as I deserve? Thou wouldst have to say... But Thy great mercy does not allow Thee to say it, and therefore Thou dost look upon me as a sick madman, and pity me, and continue to lay Thy hand heavily upon me. Oh, how great is my confusion, seeing that in return I show Thee such ingratitude, and tell Thee that Thou art cruel; ("Thou art changed to be cruel towards me"*) at the time when Thou art showing so much compassion towards me. Continue, therefore, my God, in order that I may live, to treat me according to Thy great mercy. Do not attend to what I say: let unmortified nature cry out, for it is senseless. Deal not with me according to my deserts, but "according to Thy great mercy."

6. When shall I ever be able to render Thee worthy thanks, O my Jesus, for Thy tender mercies vouchsafed to me this

* Job xxx. 21.

morning? For a long time, as I have been constantly plunged in the consideration of my sins and my iniquities, I could not raise my eyes from them: and seeing myself every day weaker against evil, I almost fell into despair. But Thou didst deign in the end to manifest to me that all this pain comes from not having sufficiently considered how great are the treasures which we possess in Thee, O my Jesus. And for what reason didst Thou come into the world, except that we might to the best of our power avail ourselves of Thee.

To us given—for us born
From a maiden free from stain.*

Thou are goodness itself, and Thou hast declared countless times that Thy will is not the death but the salvation of the sinner. What blindness, then, was mine, not to cast myself into the bosom of Thy love, but, on the contrary, to be so fearful, so despondent? Thou art an infinitely

* Hymn *Pange Lingua.*

wise advocate, and hast a great desire to defend my cause; why, then, do I not take advantage of so powerful a voice? Thou art a physician of infinite skill, and hast an extreme desire to cure my infirmities: why, then, do I not make use of such a masterhand? Thou art an infinitely powerful Captain, and hast a great anxiety to defeat my enemies and liberate me: why do I not, then, have recourse to Thee and place myself under the shadow of so strong an arm? If Thou art mine, if Thou art for me, what difficult enterprise can I ever be called upon to attempt in which I am not free to avail myself with all confidence of Thee? It is true I have offended Thee, I have despised Thee; for a long time I have been indifferent to Thee, I have abandoned Thee: take Thy revenge. Here is my heart, strike it, wound it in every part, but with the darts of Thy divine love, so that it may now in spite of itself desire the good it needs. Thou couldst not take any other revenge

on it, my loving God, for this is not the time of judgment, but of pity. Do what Thou willest. I trust in Thee. Oh, if I could but have this great confidence! This, this would in the end make me holy. This is what has given sanctity to all who have it, and it is the absence of it that causes us, miserable men, to do so little for Thy honour. Give it to me, God of my heart. I seek for nothing more. Thou art all loveliness, all gentleness, all sweetness; and I have treated Thee as if there were none other so cruel as Thou art. Ah, turn and revenge Thyself—with Thy love wound my heart unto death, and awaken it to confess and to cry out with great ardour and with great love, that I have wandered far—too far astray. Thou art mine; should I not then be truly foolish if I did not avail myself of Him who so much wishes to spend Himself for me? "Let us *hasten*, therefore, to enter into that rest;"* it is thus that Thy inflamed

* Heb. iv. 11.

Apostle speaks to me, O Lord, and thus he exhorts me to *hasten* to enter into that blessed rest, which in Thy mercy Thou hast prepared for me in Paradise, if I, miserable man, do not by my demerits render myself too unworthy of it.

But what can I ever do to *hasten* the attainment of so great a good? Can I fix for myself the term of my life? Can I open with my own hand the door of this prison? Can I break the chains or loosen the bonds that keep me fettered here? Ah, Lord, Thou well knowest that this is not permitted; for we must all await the moment when it shall please our God to call us to so great a good. We may, in good sooth, pray that it may come quickly, but we cannot ourselves hasten it. I believe, therefore, in fact, that this hastening, O my beloved Lord, is the same thing as doing much good, and satisfying in this way, as far as possible, for the innumerable faults committed by us; for what doubt is there that the shorter the

time we shall have to remain in Purgatory, the sooner by consequence shall we begin to enjoy Thy eternal rest? Yes, my Jesus, may it please Thee to grant that I may in this way hasten to behold quickly Thy most gracious countenance. This will be my rest, this will be my joy, this my longed-for felicity. But what will become of me, miserable man, what will become of me, if after death I have to wait years upon years before I see Thee? Ah, no, dear Lord, grant rather that I may suffer in intensity in Purgatory what I should otherwise have to suffer extensively, in order that the suffering may thus be less protracted. Let all these pains, then, come upon me at once, in order that they may the sooner end, for the greatest of all pains will certainly be delay in coming to the sight of Thee.

7. Being engaged in prayer, with the intention of asking from the Lord the gift of wisdom, which is a right appreciation of divine things, and wishing with that

view to enter into the consideration of the divine greatness, and to penetrate into Paradise, an unusual avidity was awakened in me. I then thought that, like a bat that wanted to gaze upon the sun, I was driven away from thence by all the saints and precipitated into hell, which was the place my sins had deserved. Hence, the moment the thought of Paradise come before my mind I burst into tears, which continued the whole hour of my prayer, from the consideration of those said sins, with various acts of compunction, of humiliation, and invocation.

If a noble maiden living in France, for example, had been married by proxy to an Italian nobleman living in Italy, she would undoubtedly strive to gather information from all her relations who might return from Italy as to the qualities of her husband; and if she heard from all unanimously that there was not in all Italy any cavalier to be compared to him; that he was all beauty, all good-

ness, all graciousness; that it was not possible to find the slightest blemish in his features; that his manners attracted all hearts, that his voice enraptured the soul, and that he possessed other like gifts in the highest degree; if, I say, all this were announced to the bride by the first who returned from Italy to France, and were confirmed afterwards by the second, again by the third, and again by the fourth, and so on by all successively in more glowing accents of praise, who can ever express how she would burn with longing that he would quickly send for her? How would she look out for his messengers? how would she live in expectation of his ships? how continually say within herself with ardour —"Ah! when, when shall I see him?" My beloved Jesus, Thou art in heaven, and from heaven Thou hast deigned to espouse this poor soul of mine that dwells on earth. Thy having given me holy Baptism and the religious vocation, my God, is a pledge to me of these most

sweet espousals; and from all whom I question respecting Thee, I hear such things as cannot be realized by those who have not seen them.

They tell me that if a hundred suns were united together, they could not compare with the glory of Thy face. St. Teresa, who only saw Thy hands, tells me that she was for many days rapt in ecstasy by this vision. Those who have heard Thee speak, all assure me that Thou art able to enchain every heart by a word. Those who have seen Thee in joy, affirm that Thou canst brighten every soul with a smile. Besides all this, they tell me that Thou dwellest in a kingdom more glorious than mortals have ever seen; since in its streets gold is trodden under foot, as mud is here. They tell me that Thou hast a Father of such exalted greatness that He is omnipotent, and that a sign from Him makes the abyss tremble. They tell me that Thou hast a Mother, to see whom once any one would sacrifice his sight for

ever; that Thou hast around Thee a court of ministers, of pages, of cavaliers, which is countless; that each one of them is greater than any king in this world. In fine, they tell me so many things, O Lord, of Thy beauty, of Thy excellence, and of Thy unimaginable greatness, that it is no longer possible for me to remain at a distance from Thee. Ah! deign to show me now at once Thy glorious face. "Show us Thy face, and we shall be saved."* Now I understand how Thy Catherine of Siena, Thy Magdalen of Pazzi, Thy Gertrude, Thy Teresa, and so many others of Thy loving virgins could no longer live on earth; for they knew they were Thy spouses, and they were all acquainted with Thy rare beauty. Ah! since it is Thy will that I continue to live, grant that I may at least use my time in adorning myself as is befitting, in order to be at once ready, when Thou shalt send Thy messengers to me and command me to come to Thee.

* Psalm lxxix. 4.

Who could believe that the above-mentioned bride, hearing so many praises of her absent spouse, and having so strong a desire to see him, should not hold in readiness all her effects, prepare her jewels, arrange all her affairs, in order to set out directly on the first notice? How could she think of saying, on the arrival of the ships in the port, that there must be a delay in order that she may get ready? She would already long before have taken leave of all, separated herself from all, and, at the sight of the galleys come to take her she would cry out at once—"Let us go." How then shall it be, O Spouse of my soul, if, when Thy messengers come at the end of my days to give me notice that it is the hour of departure, I have to ask for time to prepare myself? have to say—"Wait until to-morrow, wait until to-morrow; I require some further time for repentance; I am not prepared, I am not ready." O my Jesus! do not permit it: by Thy love for this poor soul, no longer

mine but Thine in very deed, since Thou hast espoused it. Grant that now at least I may labour to prepare myself as I ought, that I may lay by the marriage portion, and make ready the garment in which I am to meet Thee; that I may take leave and separate myself from all, and retain no kind of tie here. This will be my consolation during Thy bitter absence, that I shall be able to appear before Thee a little more adorned, since Thou has given me so much time for preparation. This is the thought which Thou wert pleased to give me this morning on this word—"Show us Thy face and we shall be saved," and be Thou blessed for it. But I have not been able to explain it in writing as clearly as Thou didst put it before me.

8. I wished this morning to consider before God whether, in case I were offered a very conspicuous office, I could consistently with perfection refuse it, or whether the repugnance which I feel for

it now does not arise from some secret self-love. I saw in a clear light what I am now going to set down. First, it seems to me certain that, if I were now willing to neglect, as I have done at other times, my spiritual duties—prayer, reading, recollection—and bury myself in study only, I should not have much difficulty in accepting such an employment by reason of the work attached to it, but should rather ambition it. In fine, what now makes it contrary to my wishes is seeing that I should in consequence run a great risk of falling into much carelessness and encountering great anxieties; that I should be subject to great distractions, and should hardly (considering the imperfection and weakness of my spirit,) be able to maintain the small amount of devotion which our Lord now graciously pleases to communicate to me. It might however seem that, if such an office were offered me, I should do nothing but trust in God, that He would assist me, and thus

accept it. But, notwithstanding this, I have judged that I ought first to refuse it, so far as I could within the limits of perfect obedience; because in the first place I ought, as much as in me lies, to fly from occasions; nor should I pretend to special assistance from God in those dangers which I can avoid by ordinary means. If afterwards obedience persisted in wishing that I should accept the employment, then I ought to accept it with great courage, and firmly trust in God, because then I would have a right to constrain Him even to work miracles, if there were need. I should, therefore, in the beginning refuse; nor would such a refusal cause any scandal (which is another point we should look to), because, the post being one of distinction, it would be edifying on my part to refuse it. Thus, therefore, I have resolved to do, in the name of God, whenever such a case arises, and I have had on this point great clearness of knowledge, joined with tenderness and tears even more than usual.

9. "If any man think himself to be religious," says St. James, "not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain."* What has this clause, "deceiving his own heart," which is put in opposition, to do with "not bridling his tongue?" Are not these two things, not to bridle the tongue and to deceive the heart, independent of each other? No, they are closely connected; because good men, such as the Apostle has before his mind, and especially Religious, are not used to exceed with the tongue without first deceiving the heart. To deceive is to excite to evil with feigned reasons which seem to show that a thing is good, or that it is not wrong. And thus Religious first deceive their hearts, persuading themselves that speaking somewhat freely on a chance occasion is not wrong; and that, on the ground of proper relaxation, this or that sharp word is not a great sin. And so they seek for various apparent reasons in order to gloss over their fault. What happens in

* St. James i. 26.

the case of the tongue, I am conscious, to my confusion, of doing in my various other occupations. In eating, for example, or using my eyes, I first deceive my heart. And so it is not surprising if, in doing wrong so freely, I deceive myself, though I do not deceive God.

10. The most holy Sacrament is called "The pledge of future glory:" therefore it is worth more than glory, for no one gives as a pledge a thing of less value than that of which it is the pledge.

Dost Thou wish, my God, to do what is right and just? If so, always sacrifice my good name, since I, by reason of my having already had other troubles, have not such reputation, nor such credit, nor so much to lose as others.

Again, in Thy exalted judgments, which we should rather revere with humility than discuss with reasons, it will be from time to time expedient that Thou send to my Order some trial, some persecution, some

calumny in the person of one of its members, and thus it will come to pass that all suffer through one, and consequently perchance turn against him. Ah! Good Lord. "Lo, here am I; send me!" Let me be the servant chosen in such a cause to be pilloried, and pardon the others who have worn this habit worthily, and have not, like me, profaned it by the tepidity of my life and the disorder of my conduct.

Again, Thy general Providence may sometimes require that a traveller should fall into the hands of robbers, who will imprison him in a forest; or that on some voyage he be taken by the Turks, who will condemn him to slavery. "Lo, here am I; send me!" Ah! let me be, O Lord! let me be the servant made use of by Thee. Thou knowest that many times already before making this present offer I have with much importunity begged this grace of Thee in order that in a life of slavery, I may do that penance for my many sins which I cannot

resolve to do voluntarily; and thus, since I have asked Thee for it, this calamity will not fall so heavily upon me as upon another, upon whom it might come unexpectedly. Oh, happy me, if I should ever find myself in irons, barefoot, dirty, half-naked, having to serve an inconsiderate master, who would scourge me cruelly every day, and also scarcely give me food enough to sustain life, and no bed to rest on. I should thus compensate for the many banquets with which I have pampered my body.

Again, it will perchance be necessary, in order that men may not, as they are so inclined to do, murmur sinfully against Thy far-reaching and most just Providence, that some one shall have to bear the blame of some unfortunate accident, or public chastisement that may occur: as happened to Thy servant Bernard, when he had stirred up the Christian provinces with so much ardour to that crusade which had after-

* Isaias vi. 1.

wards such an unhappy issue. The scandalized people exonerated Thee and laid the blame on him, as if he had rashly suggested in Thy name that which was not Thy will. "Lo, here am I!" I offer myself to be the one who, in such a case, shall bear the blows which might be aimed at Thee. "It is good for me if Thou deign to use me as a shield." I will say to Thee with that same holy servant of Thine, "Willingly will I bear the evil-speaking tongue of the detractor and the poisoned dart of the blasphemer, so that they may not reach Thee. I shrink not from infamy, if no inroad may be made on the glory of my God." In a word, I offer myself to Thee as the vilest and most contemptible of servants. Make use of me in any case required—in the sicknesses Thou shalt send into the world, the mortalities and pestilences—keeping in health the man who is more capable of promoting Thy honour, and let me die, who scarcely do anything but offend Thee, although I so often promise

and vow to obey Thee. This is the compact I desire Thee to make with me, if Thou deignest to render me worthy of it. And so, in any misfortune that may happen to me, however painful or sharp or disgraceful it may be, I will remember that Thou art making use of me, according to the offer that I here make to Thee: and I will try by this thought to calm and console myself, and even to rejoice, if Thy grace (without which I can do nothing) will so far assist me. So be it, my God. Deign to accept this offering in the simple sincerity in which I strive to present it to Thee.

11. This very day the Lord, to take from my mind every anxiety, caused me to meet with a chapter in the book entitled *The Way of perfection*, written by St. Teresa, in which I found minutely described the mode of prayer which He has by His grace communicated to me hitherto; so that there remains scarcely a doubt but that it is conformable to

His most holy will: and so the spiritual Father told me also. It is the twenty-eighth chapter, in which the prayer of recollection is described. It seems to me, if I may speak the truth, that I have experienced the quiet, if not of the three powers altogether, (though I have at times imagined them to have been for a good space of time absorbed in God in a great union of affection) at all events of the will which remains fixed in Him, enjoying Him, and desiring to transform itself entirely into Him. If my mind ever wanders, it is so slightly that it returns soon, and ceases not even for a second to pray. Blessed be my Lord for so much goodness. And thus the hour passes with extraordinary speed.

At the same time, from the above-named chapter I have drawn a wonderful improvement; for I perceived that I used to make a mistake in picturing God present outside myself, whereas I ought to see Him within myself (where He is in

reality, according to that of the Apostle: "You are the temple of the living God"):* and thus, without at all going out of myself, I should enjoy much greater recollection. And so, as the third Sunday of Advent fell on the following day, I determined to make the prayer of the morning on the words of the current Gospel: "There hath stood One in the midst of you, whom you know not;"† and by God's grace it profited me very much.

So my mind is now calm, and in future I shall only note down (as I did at first) those lights which may be useful to others as well as myself in sermons and exhortations. These will be few, because in prayer I use the intellect but little (although I always begin with it), and rather pass on to affections; and those lights written hitherto have been communicated to me by God, through his mercy, without my meditating on them, since I strive to make my prayer with the greatest possible simplicity, knowing, as I do, that

* 2 Cor. vi. 16. † St. John i. 26.

"His conversation is with the simple."* And what is *conversation*, except talking together in a very intimate, very humble, very ordinary way? This is what I desire from God, leaving to more worthy intellects and to more advanced servants higher communications with Him, and the dignity of being raised to more elevated contemplation.

12. When princes have restored some rebel to their favour, they do not necessarily admit him to the Court, nor give him audience, nor speak to him. Hence David, having restored his son Absolom to his favour, sent the patent of remission thus: "Let him return into his house, and let him not see my face;"† and he left him there two years after his return before he spoke to him. I have, therefore, infinitely admired the mercy of our God, because He deals with the sinner just in the contrary way. For as soon as He has reinstated him in His most

* Prov. iii. 32. † 2 Kings xiv. 24.

holy grace, He allows him to treat with Him familiarly, and gives him an exalted gift of prayer, and permits him to see His face and to know His secrets; as He did in the case of St. Ignatius, and other saints, who, though only just converted, reached the highest spheres of contemplation. And so I again stirred up my confidence that my past sins would not deprive me of so much good, and I thanked Him for the little that He has up till now caused me to experience, especially this morning, thanks to the special recourse I had to the most holy Virgin.

13. "Lift not up thy eyes to riches which thou canst not have: because they shall make themselves wings like those of an eagle, and shall fly towards heaven."* What Solomon here says of temporal, may, it seems to me, be also understood of spiritual riches. For there are many who fix their eyes on a state

* Prov. xxiii. 5.

which is holy, but which they have not the power to reach, and becoming enamoured of that state and sighing for it, live on in a restless and discontented frame of mind, while they neglect to study how to perfect themselves in their own. I have therefore tried to understand from God what those spiritual riches are which my soul may now long for with well founded hope of obtaining them: whether the labours of the Indies, the sufferings of the Missions, or the abundant fruit that others gather from ministering to their neighbour;—and I saw in a very clear light that it is none of these, but that all my labour should be spent in the study of prayer: and this, it seems to me, all circumstances considered, is certainly what God wishes from me. I have, therefore, tenderly thanked Him for having singularly deigned to elect me to the great honour of treating familiarly with Him, though I have never done anything to deserve it. And if this is to be called the best part, according to

that, "Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her,"* I have excused myself in a certain sense to my Lord, who wishes a vile worm such as I am there to repose, because it is not I who have chosen myself, but He who has chosen me for it. And how much greater would my vileness be if I refused it! Not so did the Blessed Virgin act, who, though she considered herself most unworthy to be elected to the dignity of Mother of God, did not on that account draw back and excuse herself from it; but, as soon as she knew that her consecrated virginity was safe, said at once: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word."†

14. I have received in prayer the light that God is a great almsgiver; because if He so earnestly recommends almsgiving to men, much more ought He to practise it, since He is so rich, and by nature is so liberal and good. There is nothing

* St. Luke x. 42. † St. Luke i. 38.

better, therefore, than to appear before Him as a poor man : for it is not necessary for such a one, in order to ask an alms, to possess any merit or right of his own, but it is enough that he be poor ; nay, the poorer he is, the greater title he has to beg. Accordingly my own misery ought not only not to make me doubtful of obtaining from God what I ask, but should even increase my confidence.

There is a point we ought to notice, and it is that God Himself loves to give His alms in secret, just as He has recommended men to do. It is not then to be wondered at, if many who ask spiritual goods from God, appear not to receive them. Appearances are quite false, for I see that we obtain them every time that we ask for them, because God is a very generous, though a very secret, almsgiver. We cannot give an alms to a poor person without his being aware of it, although we may do it so that others shall not be cognizant

of it. But God can do it in such a manner that even we ourselves who receive it do not perceive it. And this is the greatest secrecy of all.

15. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."* This is true: because God for the sake of that charity which we exercise towards our neighbour approves of many of our works, which are otherwise very defective.

But, alas! sometimes this saying is also verified in another sense, because we make use of charity as a pretext to cover many sins, and thus charity does only too well "cover a multitude of sins." This happens when under the pretext of charity we are guilty of over-indulgent yielding to others, and reconcile ourselves to many little transgressions, and idly lose time in unnecessary recreations. Thus when I pass through the colleges, as often happens, they ask me to remain for some days, and

* 1 St. Peter iv. 8.

they often adduce as a reason for doing so the motive of charity, which covers the loss of time. If I have to render an account to God for every idle word, however small, how much more for entire days idly lost through the vain gratification of conversing with friends, if this be not done for the spiritual profit to be drawn from it by both parties.

16. "This is the will of God, your sanctification."* This is then the reason, O my God, why I should strive to make myself holy, to give pleasure to Thee. For who can doubt that we can give no greater pleasure to anyone than to fulfil his will, especially when it is a real wish, as is Thine in the present case? I ought, therefore, to seek to make myself holy in order to give Thee pleasure, not to receive pleasure from Thee, even though it be in a spiritual matter; not in order to receive illuminations of mind, sweetness, tears, consolations, but only to

* Thess. iv. 3.

give Thee pleasure. And what, Beloved of my soul, more sublime than this can ever be imagined? That Thy creature should be placed in such a position as not to aspire to receive any pleasure from Thee, but rather to give it to Thee! Is not this almost a desire to render us superior to Thee? For if, according to Thy glorious word, "It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive;"* giving is the superior, receiving the inferior action; and the creature who wishes to give Thee pleasure, and not to receive pleasure, succeeds in a certain manner in making himself greater than Thee. Thy extreme goodness, then, O Lord, condescends even thus low. This is what Thou wishest from us—this is Thy desire—that on this one point we chiefly set our hearts. Who ever saw or heard of such a thing? To think that I, a miserable creature, a worm, the vilest dirt of the earth, should say to Thee that I aspire to nothing from Thee, but only to give Thee

* Acts xx. 5.

pleasure! And by this very act Thou receivest from me a great satisfaction, and so I am more pleasing to Thee.

17. This morning the Lord communicated to me a great feeling of affection for penance, which I am to do not so much in satisfaction as in punishment for my sins. I am not to aim at satisfying by it for those temporal pains which on their account I owe either in this life or the next, for I am even to wish that justice should be exercised on me: but I am purely to aim at taking vengeance on myself for so many outrages offered to God. This is the flesh, to please which I have been so disloyal to God, so irreverent, and for this I have to take vengeance. And so I have to take vengeance on this mouth, on these eyes, on all these my senses by mortifying them; in fine, vengeance on my whole self. Am I not he who has done so much harm even to myself by standing in the way of so many graces, which God in

His goodness would otherwise have communicated to me? Why then should I pardon myself? I am my own greatest enemy, according to that: "He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul! I have no greater foe. No one has done me so much harm, no one has caused me greater misfortunes: let me, therefore, treat myself as I deserve, although I am not to chastise myself so much for the evil which I have done myself, as for the offences I have dared to commit against God. The vengeance which God defers to take on a traitor like me, who have in consequence been so offensive to Him, I wish to accelerate, as I see no reason that it should be so long delayed. Pardon me, O God, this outburst of indignation, as it is, to all appearance, but too just. Should all my ingratitude towards Thee, my many insults, and all my perversity pass with impunity? Who among men would forgive even a part of such a debt? Thou hast already done much, O my God, in entirely wiping away

my sins—for, oh, grant I entreat Thee, at all events, that I may not be a cast-away for ever from divine love—but why shouldst Thou also remit the punish-ment.

18. I meditated on the good thief; on the various stages of his conversion, and how God fails not to visit with some greater grace him who corresponds with those previously bestowed. The first act of the good thief was to chide his companion: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condem-nation"—*Neque tu times Deum, qui in eadem damnatione es.** These words were almost equivalent to saying: "Even were this man as bad as those who are now cursing him deem him to be, it becomes not you, who are yourself a malefactor, to curse him." Any upright man might have administered this rebuke. He then proceeded further and added: "But he is not a malefactor, but we are:" "And

* St. Luke xxiii. 40.

we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done no evil"—*Nos quidem juste, nam digna factis recipimus; hic autem quid mali gessit?* * Here he advanced as far as self-humiliation, and the profession that Christ was indeed a Man of holiness; having been moved thereto by His patience under suffering and His charity for His persecutors. A much greater grace was requisite to attain this stage than the first. But a still greater was required for the third, which he soon after reached, when he confessed that Christ was true God: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom"—*Domine, memento mei cum veneris in regnum tuum.*† This stage he reached because, step by step, he corresponded with the previous greater or lesser graces which he had received. Therefore a faithful correspondence with God, in accordance with the measure of grace which He gradually bestows,

* St. Luke xxiii. 41. † St. Luke xxiii. 42.

is absolutely necessary: "We exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain"—*Exhortamur vos ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis.** In this instance I recognized also how God rewards every act of zeal done in His honour and for the salvation of souls, trivial though it be, as was the first act of the penitent thief, which, as I said before, any upright man might have done.

19. No payments ought to be handed in with such dainty care, if I may use the phrase, as those wherewith we settle the tax attached to a benefice commonly called *the pension.* Thus this tax must be paid with the greatest punctuality and before all other charges. It will only be received in coin of full weight and good ring; nor will the Roman Exchequer receive any that is not coined in its own mint. And the reason of all this is that this is the tax on a Benefice—*the pension* —and therefore whoever wishes for the

* Cor. vi 1.

Benefice is content to comply with the conditions imposed. The recital of the Divine Office is called a pension or tax (*pensum persolvet*—he shall pay the tax) and it is indeed the pension or tax attached to a large Benefice such as priests enjoy, especially in celebrating Holy Mass. We should not therefore be surprised if we have to pay this duty with so much integrity.

If one make me the confidant of his feelings, of some secret grief or trouble, the confidence and esteem thus shown in the desire to open his heart to me, incline me to love him. But if I afterwards find this same man who has shown me such seeming confidence going about and telling the same matters indifferently to every one he meets, I no longer value his action towards me, but rather hold him in contempt for his apparent mockery. The same thing happens in our intercourse with God. He sets great store on my

confiding to Him exclusively my every grief and every trouble. "Before Him I declare my trouble"—*Tribulationem meam ante ipsum pronuncio.** But if afterwards I disclose them to others, complaining and opening to them my heart, God can no longer value as an act of special friendship the conduct I pursued towards Him. Therefore I will be content that God shall be the sole witness of my sorrows; nor will I go elsewhere in search of consolation by publishing them abroad.

20. "Thou dwellest in the holy place, O God of Israel"—*Tu autem in sanctis habitas, Deus Israel.*† Here is a motive assigned by Christ to the Father for His own restoration from death to a glorious life, as appears from the commentary on the words of the Psalmist—"O God my God, look upon me: Why hast thou forsaken me. . . . Thou dwellest in the holy place, O God of Israel." Among many

* Psalm cxli. 3. † Psalm xxi. 4.

other lights suggested by these words, this is one: Christ might have presented to the Father, for the purpose indicated, many other attributes, each of which would have expressed His object with equal force. He preferred, however, to rely upon His sanctity, knowing as He did that His Father delighted in none other. In proof whereof the seraphim in heaven, in order to please Him, ceaselessly cry out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God"—*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus;* omitting altogether to remind Him of His omnipotence, His infinitude, and His wisdom. This light dawned upon me from God through the medium of a sharp reproof; for having found in these words excellent ideas, but not that sweetness of consolation with which God in His mercy usually visits me, I felt grieved; when suddenly, without previous warning, He inspired me with this reflection just noted down, and at the same time uttered the reproof, that we men are more in-

tent on being consoled by God (wherein holiness does not consist) than on being holy—or, in other words, doing His holy will. But as God, in whatever way He speaks to the soul, even if it be in words of reproof, always gives delight, the desired consolation came back, and I continued to feel it throughout the words that followed: "The praise of Israel"—*Laus Israel;* when I considered that He goes so far as to find glory in the service of men: "Thou art my servant, Israel, in thee will I glory"—*Servus meus es tu, in te gloriabor.*† If, therefore, God glories in having me for a servant, how can I possibly be ashamed of being one? or how can I, through human respect, abstain from openly professing, on fitting occasions, that I am such. "I am Thy servant, O Lord; in Thee will I glory, and in Thee alone."

21. "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth"—*Osculetur me osculo oris*

* Isaias vi. 3. † Isaias xlix. 3.

*sui!** It appeared to me one morning after celebrating Holy Mass that I was able to address these words confidently to God in the sense I shall now endeavour to explain. One is struck with wonder at the reflection that so many of the saints, among the other remarkable works attributed to them, bestowed a kiss upon some leper; and that God was so pleased with the act that He often thereby gave them the grace of restoring health to the infected. St. Eleazar, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Martin, St. Catharine of Siena, and countless others effected this cure. At the moment of which I speak there dawned upon me a clear light, revealing that my soul was leprous indeed. Thereupon I took courage to ask my God to exercise in the smallest degree towards that soul the loving act of charity He had so much approved of in His servants; and in this sense I repeated these words: "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His

* Cant. i. 1.

mouth"—*Osculetur me osculo oris sui;* as I doubted not that if I were worthy of this kiss I should be instantaneously restored to health, and my soul become clothed with exceeding beauty. It seemed to me that God could make no reply to this reasoning, and could not refuse my request; for although the leprosy of my soul was most loathsome, more shocking and more unclean than any other, He ought not therefore to be deterred; as, although the act I prayed Him to perform was heroic, He ought not nevertheless deem it strange to achieve more than His servants had done in kissing lepers less polluted than I. Subsequently I thought that if God vouchsafed me this grace I should afterwards, if a secret opportunity arose, by His favour try to do that other act for His love.

22. There are two ways of clearing land become wild and overgrown with wood. The one is, axe in hand, to cut

down tree after tree. The other is, to set the place on fire. The second method is beyond comparison not only the easier, but the more salutary, for the land when burned becomes more fertile, according to Virgil's precept, "It is also often useful to burn the barren fields"—*Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros.*"* Thus it is with the soul. We may tread in the paths of various virtues, extirpating vice after vice, but this kind of work requires much time, great labour, and is less fruitful than the other. The true way of proceeding is to set fire to the heart by the intense love of God. This process in a moment effects what otherwise would require so much exertion, whilst it, moreover, not only cleanses the heart, but renders it marvellously fruitful. I felt thereupon a strong desire that God would cast on my heart this fire from heaven, as I know not how to enkindle it myself here below.

* Virgil, *Georg.* i. 83.

23. "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread"—*Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie.** It appeared to me that by this bread we might readily understand that heavenly consolation which we receive from God in prayer, in listening to His word and teachings, and in the tears we shed. It is called *bread*, because it is the universal food relished by all souls, without which the spirit becomes truly enfeebled, debilitated, and, so to say, attenuated; but with which when strengthened, she walks on with incredible vigour, like Elias, through deserts unto the summit of Mount Horeb, that is, perfection. We call it *our* bread because it is ordained for us all, and for our comfort more than for the divine glory, since we ought to feed upon it in secret, beyond the ken or knowledge of any other; for we should receive these divine consolations in our chamber, with closed doors, there to be melted and dissolved into sweet tears.

* St. Matt. vi. 11.

We call it *supersubstantial*, because as ordinary bread is the food of the inferior substance, that is of the body, so this is the food of the superior substance, that is of the soul; and also because it gives not only comfort, but a great support, supplying ample strength to overcome difficulties and vanquish temptations. We say *give it to us*, in an imperative manner, *give*, and not *bestow* or *grant*, because God loves that His servants should ask favours from Him with great confidence, almost as if He must give, and were obliged to give. If this be true in all cases, it is so specially with regard to consolation, of which we are now treating, and which seems to be the proper sustenance in this life of him who serves God faithfully. As St. Bernard says of agricultural labourers, who have not only their hire at the end of the harvest, but also get each working day a ration of bread which induces them to labour with greater assiduity—in the same manner as these labourers ask for this ration of bread

with confidence from their masters, so should we ask ours from God. Finally, we say "this day," because it is to be our daily food, as bread is; but we do not ask it for this very moment, because we must always allow a latitude to God for working out His ends; nor should we insist on His instant action unless compelled by the direst necessity; for to act otherwise would be to demand the performance of a miracle.

On this occasion I could not help being surprised that my soul was able to live so long without tasting this bread—for many months, nay, for many years—since, miserable sinner that I am, I am conscious of having passed whole years without mental prayer; and I feared that my soul had in consequence become so feeble and weak in virtue, that if not dead, which I cannot positively affirm, she has oftentimes been in extreme danger of expiring: "I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread"—*Per-*

cussus sum ut fœnum, et aruit cor meum, quia oblitus sum comedere panem meum."* In the meantime I have been sustained; for mine was like the case of some of whom we read, who sustained life for a time by the odour alone of bread without further nourishment. So it is with me; engaged as I have been in preaching, in frequent reference to the Scriptures, and in reading books of devotion—holy thoughts necessarily found their way to my mind, and thus have I supported life by the odour of bread, and up to the present time, though without actual food, have dragged on a miserable existence to "the greater glory of God."

24. "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway"—*Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo: ne forte cum aliis prædicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar.*† I

* Psalm ci. 5. † 1 Cor. ix. 27.

think these words ought to cover with confusion all of us who, esteeming our talents and preaching necessary to the world, abstain from fittingly chastising the body, under the pretext of better preserving ourselves for working out the greater glory of God. Nor is there ever wanting some one to flatter and tell us that we should take care of ourselves and have consideration for ourselves. O holy Apostle! I fain would ask, if what they exhort us to do be right, why is it that you are thus chastising yourself with merciless severity? Is it possible that you see not how necessary your preaching is to the world? Preserve yourself for the sake of the many nations still open to receive from you the Gospel light; spare yourself during the toils of travel and perils of the sea. For what end do you undergo, in addition, those multiplied fasts, those ceaseless vigils, those repeated scourgings? Do not the toils by land and the perils of the sea suffice? You surely are aware that those frequent

penitential exercises hasten the approach of death, and if *you* die, who will survive to propagate, in the manner predicted, the glory of God? So would I fain have spoken; but it would have been all superfluous; for the Apostle knew beforehand all I could say; he knew his value, his talents, and the great fruit resulting from his preaching, as he had written to the Corinthians: "Now we have received the spirit that is from God, that we may know the things that are given us from God" —*Nos autem spiritum qui ex Deo est accepimus, ut sciamus quæ a Deo donata sunt nobis.** And yet he ceased not from severe penitential exercises, knowing that he was under a stricter obligation to prevent his own reprobation than to seek the salvation of others. From the words quoted above we may infer the proper measure of our penance, and how far it should extend, to wit, until the body is subject to the spirit, and demeans itself like the servant that it really is. In a

* 1 Cor. ii. 12.

word, as civil war cannot be brought to an end until the rebels are completely vanquished and submit to authority, so we should not cease from penance whilst any rebellion lingers in our senses. Who is so holy as not to be sensible of this rebellion, in a greater or less degree, until his release by death?

25. "For Thy arrows are fastened in me, and Thy hand hath been strong upon me"—*Quoniam sagittæ tuæ infixæ sunt mihi, et confirmasti super me manum tuam.** It seems to me that God has enabled me to understand the meaning of these words, which, if I err not, is as follows: When a hunter desires to overtake a fugitive animal such as a doe or a kid, what does he do? He discharges at her several arrows, some of which at last taking effect either impede her flight or stay it altogether; then the hunter rushes in and secures his prey. Now, I consider that in this verse of the third

* Psalm xxxvii. 3.

Penitential Psalm the holy Prophet adopted this similitude; for when he fled from God, the Lord by the arrows of many tribulations, first predicted by Nathan and afterwards launched against him, caused him to stay his flight until He reached him with His most holy hands: "His hand hath been strong upon him"—*Confirmavit super eum manum suam.** And thus God took possession of him. In the same manner, too, God continually acts towards sinners, and so I believe He has acted by myself. For He wounded me in my ears† and disabled me for conversation, discussion, and the pursuit of vanities which I followed almost to my ruin, and thus He caused me to pause in that career. Then He laid His hands upon me by inspiring me with a strong desire to yield myself up entirely to Him and, leaving vanity, to cling to truth alone. I therefore besought Him that "His hand might be strong upon

* Psalm xxxvii. 2.

† Father Segneri was afflicted with deafness.

me," so that I might never be able to escape; and that He would never remove His arrows from my ears if they help to keep me steadfast. I have come, therefore, to the conclusion that the arrows of tribulation should be made fast, that is, driven deep, as otherwise they would be easily shaken off and fail to take effect. I gathered, too, that sinners are not affected the moment they feel the stroke of adversity, but only after a long period of tribulation; and so it has been with me.

26. "Their soul abhorred all manner of meat, and they drew nigh even to the gates of death"—*Omnem escam abominata est anima eorum, et appropinquaverunt usque ad portas mortis.** How is this passage to be interpreted? By all manner of meat is meant the manna, which by its manifold savours was equivalent to all meats; and by manna I mean prayer, to which, as I said elsewhere, all the properties of manna may be ascribed. I now meditate on the phenomenon that

* Psalm cvi. 18.

the manna of old either pleased exceedingly, or exceedingly displeased, and it was accordingly spoken of in terms of extreme praise or blame. As often as it pleased, the Hebrews exclaimed in their admiring wonder, *Man-hu*, signifying, "What is this?"*—*Quid est hoc?* When it displeased, they called out in intense disgust, "Our soul now loatheth this very light food"—*Anima nostra jam nauseat super cibo isto levissimo.*† No moderation in judgment or taste was ever exhibited with regard to it. Thus it is with prayer; for experience teaches me that it either delights above measure or disgusts above measure, and therefore few who do not delight in prayer will have recourse to it. Whoever finds not delight in prayer renounces it easily, and comes to wonder how any one can find pleasure in it. This is the reason that I importune my God to give me a strong relish for prayer, and not to suffer me to lose the fulness of His sweet consolations. For, though

* Exodus xvi. 15. † Numbers xxi. 5.

I hope it is my purpose to pray with equal application of mind and will in time of desolation, I am afraid of myself and the example furnished by the Hebrews, when the manna, by reason of their sins, no longer yielded the usual variety of exquisite savours.

27. The thought occurred to me with great vividness to-day, that I ought to make an immense account of my soul, not because it is mine, but because it much more belongs to Christ than to me, since He purchased it with His precious Blood, according to the text, "Know you not you are not your own? You are bought at a great price"—*An nescitis quoniam non estis vestri? Empti enim estis magno pretio.** I therefore felt strongly impelled to ask great favours from God in its behalf, namely, that He would enrich it with many gifts and graces and send me some faithful guide for its direction in spiritual progress. For

* 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

after such direction I have yearned much, though without success in consequence of my present wandering mode of life, which compels me to travel from one college to another. In fine, I came to the conclusion that I might boldly ask for myself of God any favour that He had ever granted to another; for I entreat not for my own sake—from that point of view I am wholly unworthy of His regard—but for the sake of one that belongs to Himself, one that is so highly prized by Him and bought by Him at as great a price as any saint in heaven. It further occurred to me that for the same reason I ought to watch over myself with the greatest solicitude; not indeed over the body (for it was not that which Christ purchased with His most precious Blood), but over the soul, to be guarded as a thing not my own, and which therefore, even on the ground of that courtesy which prevails in human society, I am bound to treasure with more considerate care; just as if some prince confided to my

care a precious brilliant, I should be much more careful of its safety than if it belonged to myself. When we tell men of the world to reverence the soul, we are wont to allege as a reason for our advice, that it is their own; and so far we are right. But for my part, the knowledge that the soul is not my own is far the most potent motive to induce me to hold it in reverence: "Know you not, you are not your own?"—*An nescitis quoniam non estis vestri?*

28. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field"—*Simile est regnum cœlorum thesauro abscondito in agro.* This hidden treasure we may, I think, take as meaning evangelical poverty; not only because this kind of poverty possesses all the riches it can desire—Divine Providence being the untiring minister to its needs; nor yet because this kind of poverty is hidden—there being few, even in religion, who thoroughly appreciate its value; but be-

cause to no other evangelical virtue can we apply literally the description given of this treasure, viz., "which a man having found, goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."* Of no other virtue can it be affirmed that in order to its acquisition a man should part with all he has. It cannot be so affirmed of evangelical chastity, for a man may retain his possessions and preserve his chastity: nor of evangelical obedience, for he may retain them without detriment to his obedience: nor of evangelical humility, for his retention of wealth is not inconsistent with the deepest humility, and so on of all the other evangelical virtues. But not so with evangelical poverty. It is impossible to acquire this virtue whilst we retain possession of property; for its very essence consists in leaving all things: "We have left all things and followed Thee"—*Reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te.*

* St. Matt. xiii. 44.

29. In this morning's prayer, I asked of God most fervently (the subject of my meditation suggesting the request) that He would show me clearly how one might arrive at a true desire to be contemned, and at a love of such contempt, so as to rejoice therein. We can understand indeed that a man may by the help of divine grace bear contempt, like any other human affliction, but it seems incredible that he should be able to take delight in it. At last, after some futile attempts on my part to master the subject, God was pleased to shed a light upon my soul, whereby I saw that whosoever has even a moderate sense of things spiritual easily arrives at the knowledge of this truth, that whatever affords us efficient aid in detaching the heart from the inordinate love of men is a treasure of great price. The more we retire into ourselves and stand apart from creatures and the love for them, the more easily we attain to a union with God and to the possession of His charity, and to the identification of

ourselves with Him. Of this there can be no doubt. Now nothing detaches the heart from our fellow-men more than any exhibition of contempt on their part towards us, not only because when we are held in esteem we naturally entertain a certain affection for those who so esteem us, and so for their sakes are sometimes tempted to deviate from strict rules and to become their servants and subjects, contrary to St. Paul's precept: "But I will not be brought under the power of any"—*Sed ego sub nullius redigar potestate;** but also because the honour and esteem of the world attract towards us a multiplicity of friends, according to that of the Proverbs: "Many honour the person of him that is mighty"—*Multi colunt personam potestatis.*† In such cases even those who unworthily envy us, outwardly show us great respect, pay us court, and offer us their services. Hence it comes to pass that the heart becomes attached to all

* 1 Cor. vi. 12. † Prov. xix.

these persons "and is brought under their power"—*ut sub illorum redigatur potestate.* On the other hand, when opprobium habitually attaches to us, the mass of mankind gradually desert us, and our liberty is restored. Furthermore, should we fall into great disesteem, we are abandoned by every one, and if this does not force us to turn to God, it at all events removes all difficulty from our way. This, then, is the reason why it is so desirable to be held in contempt —it is the shortest road to God, for it detaches the heart from men, and thus enables it to obtain more readily possession of Him, who wills not only to be loved more than all, but alone and with all the heart. From this consideration I learned how great was the hidden treasure bestowed by God upon me in my deafness; for it naturally brings me into contempt, and it takes away from the community among whom I live a great motive for respecting me and waiting on me, and paying me court. For un-

doubtedly my deafness will debar me from all promotion to high office in religion, and no one entertains, in my regard, either hope or fear, the two great incentives to esteem among the many. Thus, being abandoned by men, it remains for me only to give myself entirely to God: "My father and my mother have left me; but the Lord hath taken me up"—*Pater meus et mater mea dereliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me.**

On the present occasion I went a step further, and came to the conclusion that it would be a piece of good fortune that no one should in future speak well of me or do me any manner of service, or present me with any gift; in a word, that I should be forgotten by all the world, "for I will not be brought under the power of any"—*Ego sub nullius redigar potestate.* In this way my heart will be disengaged as much as possible from the love of men and obligations

* Psalm xxvi.

to them, and continue free for God alone. The heart is of small compass, and the more of it we give, however innocently, to man, the less remains for God. Moreover if I have to discharge obligations to man, how many of my acts must be incompatible with perfection? Liberty then! liberty! This is the great good; this is the state in which the Apostle resolved to maintain himself, as he declared in these words: "All things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any"—*Omnia mihi licent, sed ego sub nullius redigar potestate.** In these words the Apostle seems to say: All that is lawful for others is permitted to me; thus might I accept payment for my preachings, and receive alms and gifts as others do: but I will not be the servant of any one; not from worldly pride, but in order the better to preserve my liberty of spirit and serve God with a free heart.

* 1 Cor. vi. 12.

30. It seemed to me this morning that during prayer I had a special light to understand this truth: that all the natural gifts in which I am wanting help to bring God to me, whereas all those which I have take Him away from me. Consequently, in order to enjoy God perfectly, I must part with all that is not God. This truth when read in a book, as sometimes happens, is one thing; when known by experience, another. For by experience I have found in practice that when I turned my thoughts to something of which I had deprived myself for God's sake, I felt my heart suddenly lifted up to an intimate union with Him; but when my thoughts dwelt on anything still retained by me, my heart at once seemed to fall back upon itself and to separate from Him. So true is this, that even the very human enjoyments which come to me unbidden in the course of the day, and in which I unwillingly participate, either from motives of civility or convenience, or from the frailty of human nature which

incites thereto, these enjoyments, I say, when I meditate on them leave me dry and bring nothing from God to me. Nay, on account of their presence God even seems to withdraw Himself, as if I had already my due proportion of sustenance and refreshment, and was therefore entitled to none further at His hands. What a difference there is between feeding on hay and feeding on manna! What else then ought to be my daily study but to cast off and divest myself of all that is not God: in order to withdraw myself not only from the power of men (on this point we have already insisted), but from the power of all other creatures, all affections, and all passions, until I achieve the entire annihilation of self, signified by St. Paul in these words: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me"—*Vivo ego, jam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus.** By ceasing to live in myself, in other words, by ceasing to have a living power of willing or not willing,

* Gal. ii. 20.

and of rejoicing or sorrowing for anything belonging to me, my Lord will live in me. In one case only have I found that even human advantages and enjoyments lead to God, and that is when they are regarded as coming from His hand, and therefore enkindle within me the fire of His love. Nevertheless, the thought of utter poverty with contentment in it leads more directly to Him, than the thought of possessing something with the sense of gratitude for His gifts. It follows that we ought to pray to God rather to take all from us, than to give us anything that is not Himself; for when all else fails us, He gives Himself to us of His own accord, even though we seek Him not: "They have found Me that have sought Me not"—*Inventus sum a non quærentibus me.** When we possess anything else, we are obliged to seek Him out if we would enjoy Him in addition to it, and we sometimes grow weary in the search.

* Isaias lxx. 1.

31. Having asked God this morning that He would be pleased to vouchsafe me His holy gifts in prayer in the same abundance with which He bestowed them on many of His servants, I mentally experienced this answer directly from Himself, namely, that He would not vouchsafe them to me, as I was given to vanity, and they would be likely to puff me up with pride. But resuming the argument, I replied that the more abundantly He vouchsafed His gifts, the more readily should I apprehend His Majesty and my own vileness, the reverence due to Him and the contempt due to myself, and thus run the less risk of becoming puffed up with pride. Methought that with this reply I lovingly convinced my God, and in consequence became much consoled, and anticipated confidently that I should gain the desired object. Indeed this my reply was in itself a proof of success, for I doubt not it was suggested to me by Himself, just as the master at the very moment

when he points out to his pupil a difficulty, also suggests the solution.

32. Whilst meditating on the defence which Christ, as is recorded in the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, made for His disciples on the occasion of their being rebuked by the Pharisees for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, two profitable thoughts, among many others, occurred to me. The first was that, when under censure or reproof, I ought to leave my case in the hands of God; for if it be expedient He will plead my cause better than I could myself. The second was, to recall to mind the several occasions of danger to soul and body when God so effectually interposed on my behalf, and to resolve firmly, from a sense of gratitude, to take up the cause of God against all offenders in the same manner as He takes up my cause against my assailants. This for me is an all-sufficient reason why I should be stirred up with a zeal for souls and the conver-

sion of sinners, and therefore it is that I take note of it here. "He that touches you touches the apple of my eye"—*Qui tetigerit vos, tangit pupillam oculi mei,** God says to his servants. Who, then, can express the greatness of the zeal with which He defends each of us from visible and invisible enemies? Such, too, should be our zeal in the cause of God in opposition to His enemies of every kind, bad Christians, heretics, Gentiles, and Jews, and against great and little all alike. "I will put My zeal into thee"—*Ponam zelum meum in te:*† this is the sweet promise made to me by God through Ezechiel. "And the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up"—*Et zelus domus tuæ comedit me*‡—would be the fitting answer to make to God.

33. Having read in the life of Father Alvarez this very beautiful thought, that we must, in order to obtain from God the gift of prayer, and a loving union

* Zach. ii. 8. † Ezech. xxiii. 25. ‡ Psalm lxviii. 10.

with Him, address Him in the words that Sichem once addressed to the brothers of Dina: "Whatsoever you shall appoint I will give; raise the dowry and ask gifts, and I will gladly give what you shall demand, only give me this damsel to wife"—*Quæcumque statueritis dabo, augete dotem, et munera postulate et libenter tribuam quod petieritis: tantum date mihi puellam hanc uxorem* *—I who above all things desired the gift of prayer and a union with God at once adopted the same form of prayer and offered everything in order to obtain so dear a spouse. In the next place I reflected on the particular sacrifice God might require me to make, and I thought that what was required of Sichem was applicable to my case. He expected that every sacrifice would be required of him but the very one he was called upon to make. He expected to be asked for money, jewels, valuables, and the like; but nothing of the kind;

* Gen. xxxiv. 12.

circumcision was the only sacrifice required. Thus, I say, it is with us. We may fancy that God requires from us something great, some splendid achievement, whilst He really demands some sacrifice that will wound us painfully. And no doubt in order to an espousal with prayer we can proceed by no better method than by cutting off inordinate affections, and by suffering and by mortification. Without these, all other offerings are useless; and yet we are in the habit of giving them the last place or consigning them to oblivion. Let us, then, take lesson by Sichem, who was not discouraged by the unexpected condition, but courageously accepted it.

34. "In Thee have our fathers hoped; they have hoped and Thou hast delivered them"—*In te speraverunt patres nostri; speraverunt et liberasti eos.** This repetition is not without mystery, as it

* Psalm xxi. 5.

denotes that it suffices not that we commence to hope in order to obtain the assistance of God. Perseverance is necessary, of however little avail our hope may at first appear. A beautiful instance is given in the twentieth chapter of Judges, where we read that all the people of Israel, "as one man"—*tamquam vir unus*—went forth against the tribe of Benjamin to avenge an atrocious crime. The people went to war in the holiest of causes, they sought counsel from God; God Himself named the captain of their host and braced him to the fight; yet this entire array was signally discomfited. A second time the people hoped in God, and turned to Him for aid, and again God urged them to the fight, and a second time they suffered defeat as signal as the first. A third time! and again the people placed their hope in God, a third time invoked His blessing, and once more on Him relied. On this occasion they gained so complete a victory as to all but anni-

hilate their opponents. Now, I perceived in this narrative a vivid picture of what passes in our interior during the strife waged against passion. We must if we would attain to sanctity put our trust in God, and fight with courage. The cause is righteous, the mind is resolute, the battle is warmly contested, and yet defeat ensues. O Lord! how is this? Is it that Thou yieldest us but slight aid, although Thou Thyself didst urge us in so many ways to the fight? Why not grant us at once that victory, giving grace which will enable us to vanquish our enemies outright? No! no! Persevere in hope, continue to fight, and leave the final issue in the hands of God. Are we defeated? Be patient: He permits it in order to awake our confidence in Him, and to teach us to distrust ourselves. One such victory as the Lord knows how to grant will, if accorded, secure our triumph. Our all then depends on clinging to our arms unflinchingly, notwithstanding some mischances,

and on our renewing the battle, though often lost. During the course of this reasoning, not so much put together by my mind as infused by God Himself into my heart, the light of ineffable consolation has been shed upon my soul. For I conclude that I need not take it to heart if my passions still stir within me, and still wage war against my aspirations. God only asks that I fight the good fight. To Him only it belongs to grant the crowning victory when all my enemies shall be extirpated. "But thanks be to God," says St. Paul, "who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"—*Deo autem gratias qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.** He ascribed the combat to himself: "I have fought the good fight"—*Bonum certamen certavi*—the victory, as we see in the above passage, to God alone. Therefore in so far as I have to act in alliance with God I ought to strive with all my might, but

* 1 Cor. xv. 57.

in cases where God must act alone, my business is to pray, to supplicate His aid, to hope in Him, and finally to leave my cause in His hands without reserve. An instance of this latter kind, that must be God's work alone, would be, if eventually I find my passions quite overcome and an end put to repugnance or internal strife when there is question of obedience, self-mortification, or humiliation. This would be a thorough rout of the enemy, which God alone can grant, and to which I can only contribute by fighting manfully. By analogy, what is the part that, under divine grace, belongs to me in prayer? I must combat distractions, and keep my mind attentive and my reasoning powers active; this should be my care, but it is God's alone to grant relief from distractions, great consolation, and copious tears. In these particulars, too, I shall bow to His holy will. Thus the lesson given in this morning's example applies alike to all other situations. I must discriminate on

all occasions between what I have to do in alliance with God and that which God does acting alone.

35. The Lord our God revealed to me in this morning's prayer how under the guise of my deafness was contained a device of divine love. I saw that, whilst on the one side, if I err not, I might be more usefully employed in the care of souls by hearing confessions, by exhortations, and by missionary work; yet, on the other, on account of the weakness which I know from the past to be part of my character, I might cause greater loss to myself, than gain to others; for when employed in those avocations, it was my wont to neglect recollection and prayer and the care of my own interior. Now the Lord God has made manifest, by the infirmity with which He visited me, that He heeds not the good I might work in others, in order that I may the more seriously attend to myself, and that He makes more account of my single

soul, than of the many I might gain over to His service by my ministry. All this appears to me to evince an extraordinary delicacy of love, and lays me under an obligation to correspond with God by a reciprocal fervour of affection.

36. "My chalice indeed you shall drink"—*Calicem quidem meum bibetis.** I really think that Christ our Lord did not (if I may presume to say so) here speak with propriety. For who has drunk or who drinks the chalice of His Passion? We drink indeed out of the chalice, but He alone drank the chalice to the dregs: "Thou shalt drink it even to the dregs"—*Epotabis usque ad fæces.*† The bitterness of this chalice is twofold—the endurance of contempt, and suffering pain. Now, applying this saying to myself, I considered how much of this chalice it is mine to drink. And, first, as regards contempt: "I am a worm and no man"—*Ego sum*

* St. Matt. xx. 23. † Ezech. xxiii. 34.

*vermis et non homo,** said Christ, speaking of Himself. It is not my lot to be the worm, to be trodden under foot and be outraged by all without pity or remorse, for so it fares with worms. But it suffices if I be a man as others are, to ambition no more knowledge than others possess, to avoid all pretension and rest satisfied with myself as I am.

"The reproach of men" — *Opprobrium hominum.*† Words descriptive of Christ. This burthen, however, is not imposed on me; all that is required of me is that I should not set up to be a light among men and the star of the community among whom I live.

"The most abject of men"—*Novissimus virorum.*‡ These words also apply to Christ. But I need not descend so far. I am asked only to abstain from the ambition to be "The first of men"—*Primus virorum*, or the first personage

* Psalm xxi. 7. † Ibid. ‡ Isaias liii. 3.

in the order wherein I serve. God will be satisfied if I am content to see others of my brethren preferred before me as preachers, others gifted with superior talents; if I defer to them, speak of them in the same terms of eulogy that are commonly used by others in their regard, and rejoice when they are promoted to more famous pulpits and acquire therein an increase of reputation.

"Outcast of the people"—*Abjectio plebis.** Such was Christ. As for me, it suffices if I rejoice when more numerous and popular audiences are attracted to the preaching of others than to my own; though it should never be my lot to become thoroughly an outcast.

"All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn"—*Omnes videntes me deriserunt me.*† This was the fate of Christ. I, if ever I be laughed to scorn, shall not be so by all. The most that could happen would be that all should unite in not praising me, and even that would

* Psalm xxi. 7. † Psalm xxi. 8.

be difficult. For Him, however, it is enough if I do not want applause. The line of argument I have adopted in the foregoing instances might, if time served, be applied to others, both with regard to enduring contempt and bearing pain. Christ should therefore have said: "You shall drink of my chalice"—*De calice meo bibetis;* and not, "You shall drink my chalice"—*Calicem meum bibetis.** But so gracious is He that He desires to acknowledge the smallest obeisance as if it were the greatest act of homage, and therefore He purposely uses this precise formula to describe it. I was confounded to feel myself loath to taste a few drops of that chalice which our Lord drained to the dregs, and I implored pardon for my unworthiness, forgetfulness, and ingratitude; and in order to acquire a contempt for the esteem of men I pondered, and by God's grace apprehended the truth of the saying of St.

* St. Matt. xx. 23.

Francis, "What each one is in the eyes of God, that is he and nothing more." Enough if I be esteemed by Him, and therefore I shall try and hide myself from all others. To assume virtues when you have them not is vanity, to have them and not to hide them is truth, to have them and not to show them forth is sanctity.

37. "Who shall give me that I may find thee without and kiss thee"—*Quis mihi det, ut inveniam te foris et deosculer te?** These are the words of a soul overflowing with love for her beloved. Have they any special significance? I shall here record the sense in which God presented them to my mind's eye in prayer. The aim of the soul in prayer is none other than to embrace, to clasp, and be united with her ever-loving God, all which is expressed by that word of sweetness, "kiss." But each person arrives at the common end by a way

* Cant. viii. 1.

of his own. For some, in order to find God in prayer, it is necessary that the mind should be wrapt in the folds of some mystery wherein He may be said to lie concealed; and in order to succeed in this search they must meditate, reason, and undergo much toil. Ultimately God comes and discovers Himself by means of some word spoken to the heart or some ray of light shed upon the mind whereby He manifests His divine presence in their interior, and unseals the fountains of their tears. They then embrace Him and are sweetly dissolved. Such as these find God indeed, but are admitted to audience, so to say, within doors; as great princes, in order to uphold their dignity require their visitors to be marshaled to their presence through a long suite of apartments. Others again there are who the moment they kneel in prayer find God as it were at the threshold, nay almost outside the door. These are they who have no need of long previous consideration in order to arrive

at a union with God. The moment they lift their minds to God the union is effected. Their hearts are at once in a flame and their tears begin to flow. Such persons need make no effort to obtain an audience. This is a privilege belonging to him who has been raised by God to the height of contemplation; and this it is the soul asks from God in the words: "Who shall give to me that I may find thee without and kiss thee" —*Quis mihi det ut inveniam te foris, et deosculer te?* The soul wishes to find her delight outside, without waiting, that is without undergoing the labour of meditation. Hence she goes on to say appropriately: "And now no man may despise me"—*Et jam me nemo despiciat.** Because if he who is admitted to an audience within the apartments of his prince is held in honour by his fellows, how much more will he be esteemed whom the prince advances to the door or even into the street to meet? There is no fear but

* Cant. viii. 1.

that one so favoured will be universally respected, will be the observed of all observers, that his acquaintance will be eagerly sought after, and that all will pay him court. In like manner, who is there in the Court of heaven that will think lightly of a soul which God goes forth to meet when she approaches Him with her addresses? It is fitting that all the saints and angels should vie with each other also in going forth to meet her and pay her honour. Oh, happy me, if I one day attain to so great a blessing as to be able to dispense with the numerous reflections I must now have recourse to, at the beginning of my prayers, in order to find my God. "Who shall give to me that I may find thee without, and kiss thee, and now no man may despise me"—*Quis mihi det ut inveniam te foris et deosculer te, et jam me nemo despiciat?* But it is good for me to know my unworthiness, and to esteem it no small favour to be admitted in any fashion to an audience, instead of being

spurned from the door by His attendant angels.

38. "Depart not from me, for tribulation is very near, for there is none to help me"—*Ne discesseris a me quoniam tribulatio proxima est, quia non est qui adjuvet.** Tribulation is here, by the figure of speech called antonomasia, put for death, as is shown by Bellarmine. And although these words were placed by David in the mouth of Christ with reference to His Passion, I nevertheless applied them to myself in this morning's prayer.

In the first place I reflected that death comprised in itself all tribulations—the loss of friends, honours, and riches, together with great bodily and mental sufferings; and lastly, that which is accounted by the saints the greatest of all tribulations—the torments of a bad conscience, in that hour surpassingly poignant.

In the second place, I reflected that

* Psalm xxi. 12.

this tribulation "is very near"—*proxima est;* for, as far as I can see, its advent cannot be long postponed, and even if it could be put off for a few years, it may well still be said to be "very near"—*proxima;* as words cannot express the rapidity of the flight of these years, and their vanishing away. How many of my friends do I see drop off in the flower of their days.

In the third place, I reflected that in the hour of this tribulation "there is none to help me"—*non est qui adjuvet,* unless God in His infinite mercy come to my aid. Wretch that I am, to commit so many faults for the sake of persons, not one of whom will in that hour have either the will or the power to help me; and not to hesitate, out of complacency for them, to displease Him who alone can aid me.

A strong impression was made by this picture of my soul, abandoned at this juncture by all men, and of myself standing in judgment before the feet of Christ. If my last illness be at all

loathsome, not one, perhaps, will come near me. I trust, indeed, that then my friends may pray for me, but nevertheless I shall even by them be soon forgotten. After I am laid in the grave, even they who at first most grieved for me will shortly laugh and talk as before. Is it, then, possible that I should regard any one in this world more than God? — I gathered much fruit during this prayer, thanks to the divine goodness, and therefore I shall often revert to it from time to time, the three foregoing points embracing the best reflections on death that can be expressed in a discourse. The hope that God would help me in that hour arose in my heart, and I clasped and embraced Him with all the ardour of my love. "He on His side commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and rained down manna upon me to eat"—*Mandavit nubibus desuper, et januas cœli aperuit, et pluit mihi manna ad manducandum.**

* Psalm lxxvii. 23, 24.

39. God commanded in the old law that every sacrifice offered should be seasoned by salt. "Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest thou shalt season it with salt, neither shalt thou take away the salt . . . . from thy sacrifice: in all thy oblations thou shalt offer salt"—*Quidquid obtuleris sacrificii, sale condies, nec auferes sal . . . . de sacrificio tuo: in omni oblatione offeres sal.** From these words the saints derived the lesson, that in every penitential sacrifice of the body to God, we should be ruled by prudence, the seasoning of all we do. But alas! we make too liberal a use of this condiment. It is the nature of salt that it should be used neither in excess nor defect, both extremes being alike injurious. But if we err either way, it is better that the food should be insipid than over-flavoured; in other words, it is better in our penitential sacrifices that the salt of prudence (if we cannot hit off the true measure) should be rather under than over the mark. Take

* Lev. ii. 13.

example by the saints who have all acted up to this standard, and even those among them who most insisted on prudence, at times failed to practise it themselves.

40. We who are brought into contact with the world meet with much that, by its evil example, is calculated to draw the heart from God. For instance, how can I be indifferent to praise when I see the value set upon it by my associates? How can I not seek promotion, honour, and luxuries whilst I continually behold the estimation they are held in? I shall apply to myself the words spoken by God to the Hebrews before they went captives to Babylon: "But now, you shall see in Babylon gods of gold, and of silver, and of stone and of wood borne upon shoulders . . . but when you see the multitude behind and before adoring them, say you in your hearts: Thou oughtest to be adored, O Lord!"—*Nunc autem videbitis in Babylonia Deos aureos, et argenteos, et lapideos, et ligneos in*

*humero portari . . . visâ itaque turbâ de retro et ab ante adorante, dicite in corde vestro: Te oportet adorari Domine.** I see in the world some bowing down before the idol of sensuality, some before the idol of honours, some before that of riches, and some before that of ambition. How should I act amid this multitude? I ought with a recollected heart and a mind uplifted to God, at once exclaim: "Thou oughtest to be adored, O Lord!"—*Te oportet adorari Domine!*

Would to God I had not in religion as well as in my intercourse with the world to make use of this counsel. For what do I hear!—now so and so extolled as a preacher, not for the fruits he produces, but for the audiences he draws; now this other the topic of envy for his early promotion to an important post; or it is the being accredited to princes as a negotiator about important affairs of State, which excites admiration; or actually—having many conveniences; or, spending large

* Baruch vi. 3—5.

sums of money. Ah! no, my God! "Thou oughtest to be adored"—*Te oportet adorari.* On these and the like occasions we ought to lift up the mind at once to God, by regulating our thoughts and invoking the proper rules of conduct, and God will not fail to aid us in our efforts to fulfil the precepts enjoined in His Holy Scriptures.

41. "We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ"—*Nos stulti propter Christum, vos autem prudentes in Christo.** I know not if I can express in words the meaning of this passage as I conceived it in prayer, and as I still understand it interiorly. It is most important, however, that I should make the attempt, for I think these words contain within themselves the expression of the very essence of sanctity. There is a great difference between being wise in Christ, and foolish for Christ's sake. Both states are to be commended; but the Apostle was not

* Cor. iv. 10.

satisfied with the first and preferred the second.

There is a wisdom of the world, which breeds wickedness; there is a wisdom in Christ, which takes not away justice; and there is a foolishness for Christ's sake, which makes men holy.

I will illustrate my meaning by instances, omitting all mention of worldly wisdom, which requires no comment. I shall speak of the comparison between wisdom in Christ and foolishness for Christ's sake. I take my example from the story of the life of St. Francis Xavier, as it was on his feast that God suddenly caused this light to flash upon my mind. When there was question as to St. Francis Xavier's abandoning the good work he was prosecuting in Italy, and seeking, at his already advanced age, across vast tracts of ocean and through infinite peril, new fields in a new world, inhabited by barbarians of whose language he was ignorant, and the knowledge of which was necessary for his communicating with

them, it may be thought that the voice of wisdom ought to have been heard dissuading him from the distant voyage. If it had been, it would have been the voice of wisdom in Christ. At home the good work of the conversion of many souls and the sanctification of many cities had to be effected. Why, then, abandon a certain, though lesser, for an uncertain, though a greater good? The same argument applies to his relations with Portugal, where he had accomplished so much good in so short a time, that he was then hailed as an apostle. Where was the wisdom in his afterwards leaving India for the island Del Moro, where so many savage customs, such as cannibalism, the frequent use of poisons, and every kind of treachery prevailed? Would it not have been wiser to have tended the Christianity newly planted in India whilst it was still immature? Again, when he journeyed to Japan, and thence onward to China, his resolves bore the stamp of foolishness; but as they all

emanated from the love of Christ they made him a saint, and as they were stamped with foolishness, made him a great one. Had he remained at Rome he would have proved a good labourer in the vineyard of the Lord—in fact, he would have laboured with wisdom in Christ; but I doubt whether he would have attained to his present degree of sanctity. What I have said about St. Francis Xavier in the foregoing respects, as well as what I might add as to his sucking poisoned wounds, and of his wasting by ceaseless exertions that health which did God such service, may be said of all the saints, amongst whom I know not if there can be found one who has not committed similar acts of foolishness. And now for the conclusion at which I have arrived. I shall never effect anything great if I regulate my conduct by the strict rules of wisdom and circumspection, however just they may be. I may be good, but I can never be a saint. I have heard of some one saying that he cared

not to strive after great perfection, for knowing his own weakness, and remembering the lapse that chanced to him before, he held it better to proceed at a moderate, though a surer pace. Ah! this is wisdom, and I grant it is to be wise in Christ; but it is not foolishness for Christ's sake. St. Peter was foolish for Christ's sake when, seeing Him on the shore, he plunged into the sea in order to reach Him the more quickly. No doubt this act was rash, but Christ stretched out to him His hand. The other Apostles were wise in Christ when they limited their desires to reaching by ship; they had not, however, the grace which Peter had. What, then, shall our decision be? Why so much ado? so much consideration? If we fail, what is the consequence? We have done a foolishness indeed, but it was done for Christ's sake, and let that thought suffice. Nor need we controvert that passage in the Gospel where it is said: "What king about to make war against another king,

doth not first sit down and think whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that with twenty thousand warreth against him?"—*Quis rex iturus committere bellum adversus alium regem, non prius sedens computat, si possit cum decem millibus occurrere ei qui cum viginti millibus venit ad se?** These words counsel that wisdom which I to-day reject; but I repeat I need not controvert them, because they prove nothing against my position. Are we, let me ask, the king? or the soldiers who have to fight? The king does well to cast up first whether he has sufficient resources to bring the war to a successful issue. The soldier ought not to busy himself about this question. If we made war at our cost it would be otherwise. "But who serveth as a soldier at any time at his own cost?"—*Quis militat suis stipendiis unquam?*† asks the Apostle. We have to serve at God's expense; He has to furnish the means; it is His part to reflect. This

* St. Luke xiv. 31. † 1 Cor. ix. 7.

observation also applies to the other parable, in the same Gospel, of the man who, desiring to build a tower, calculated beforehand the amount of money required to accomplish his object, lest he might have to abandon it for want of means after he had commenced the construction, and thus expose himself to the ridicule of his neighbours. "Which of you having a mind to build a tower doth not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it, lest after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish"—*Quis ex vobis, volens turrim ædificare, non prius sedens computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum, ne posteaquam posuerit fundamentum, et non potuerit perficere, omnes qui vident incipiant illudere ei, dicentes: Quia hic homo cœpit ædificare, et non potuit consummare?**

* St. Luke xiv. 28, 29, 30.

We are not the master who builds the tower; we are the workmen to use the materials supplied by God. Let the master of the building reckon up the charge of finishing it. Let us then become foolish for Christ's sake. In other words, first let us do our work only for Christ—let Christ alone be the end and aim of all our thoughts and actions; and then let us be foolish—and we are sure to become saints.

42. Once, after celebrating Mass, I asked the Lord to reveal to me what was the mental state that would please Him most in the person who has just communicated. I knew, indeed, it was no time for exercising the intellect, but one for setting the will in motion; nor should we seek God exteriorly, when we possess Him in our own interior. In answer to my request, then, the thought was suggested to me that the mental state of such a person ought to be one of amazement. Reverence is little, humility little, grati-

tude little, love little; wonder—the greatest that can be—that is what is required. The greatest of all wonders seems above all to call for wonder, according to the words: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and a gracious Lord: He hath given food to them that fear Him"—*Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum: misericors et miserator Dominus: escam dedit timentibus se.** Nothing seems to be needed beyond amazement. God to me! God with me! God in me! When I think of it, I can only remain stunned, insensible, and rapt in boundless amazement. One would suppose that when the soldiers of Holofernes beheld the unsurpassed beauty of Judith, they would have been on the instant attracted, and that the first emotion evoked would have been love. But no! the first emotion they experienced was one of stupified wonder: "They beheld her face, and their eyes were amazed, for they wondered exceedingly at her

* Psalm cx. 4.

beauty"—*Considerabant faciem ejus, et erat in oculis eorum stupor, quoniam pulchritudinam ejus mirabantur nimis.** The first impression produced on the mind by any uncommon phenomenon is one of wonder, to which others afterwards succeed. Such should be the case with me. Beholding, if not the divine beauty (this, indeed, my heart could not endure), at least the divine goodness, I ought first to experience wonder, to which other emotions may afterwards succeed.

43. "Feed us with the bread of tears, and give us for our drink tears in measure"—*Cibabis nos pane lacrymarum, et potum dabis nobis in lacrymis in mensura.*† Whilst I reflected during this morning's prayer on my eagerness for spiritual consolations, sweetness, and tears, I recognized in this frame of mind much self-seeking, and therefore, taking example by the above verse, I prayed that God would grant me these favours

* Judith x. 14. † Psalm lxxix. 6.

in measure, that is, so far as they were necessary for my perseverance in His service; and retain or communicate to others that overplus which might be to me the occasion of vanity, pride, or self-love. But whilst I was thus rejecting consolation, I experienced it the more intensely, and with a greater flood of tears. I thence understood all my weakness, for we may be sure that very little spiritual strength is required to sustain those who abound in tenderness and love; and God, who knows how deficient I am in the former, sends the latter to my aid. It is true I deem not all my tears supernatural, but sometimes natural, and such as come when we resolve to bear our cross with patience and self-mortification. For tears do at times proceed from our human nature, when it takes fright on seeing escape from our resolution impossible, and turns to weeping and wailing as for an irremediable misfortune. This kind of weeping lasts but a short time, nor is it over-sweet. So also, is it with

those tears which flow with effort, on the occasions when we strengthen by our reflections the affection which God has awakened in the heart. The sweet, the abounding, the soul-transporting tears come unbidden and often when least expected. Such tears as these are excited by the very effort to reject them and to humble ourselves; for that effort is not made for the purpose of exciting tears, but proceeds rather from a true heart dealing in all sincerity and candour with God. It is quite clear that such tears are sent by God, for we know not ourselves whence they come, and much as we may wish to renew the emotion, we find ourselves utterly powerless and incapable of doing so.

44. I desired to persevere in my rejection of the consolation accorded to me by God in prayer, and asked Him to withhold it. For I was as a mercenary who served only for the sake of those spiritual delights, so much sweeter and nobler

than earthly joys, that it would be no matter of surprise that I should surrender the latter for the former. I felt at once that God would hearken to my petition; nay, I knew it by experience in the very prayer in which I made the request (though indeed even before I began my prayer, the lukewarm disposition I was in, notwithstanding that I omitted none of my usual preparations, foreshadowed the result), and I found myself arid, without lights, and incapable of exciting any the least emotion in my interior. I shed, indeed, a few tears; but I thought them the product of my sensuality, that sensuality which finding on the one hand that God intends to act upon me in good earnest, and to stay His hand from pouring out consolation, and on the other that I myself am resolved with God's grace to keep it in check and, so far as my weakness permits, to mortify it, looks upon itself now as having no longer either heaven or earth, but hanging suspended in the air on an everlasting cross.

On this occasion I considered that I penetrated the meaning of these words: "What have I in heaven and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?"—*Quid mihi est in cœlo et a te quid volui super terram?** Words which, containing a complete renunciation of all the joys of heaven and earth, are full of bitterness to a heart so weak as mine, which has hitherto valued God only for the sake of His gifts, and not for Himself alone. These words, however, if they gave me no comfort, inspired me with courage.

45. "My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels"—*Factum est cor meum tanquam cera, liquescens in medio ventris mei?*† These were the words which moved me in this morning's prayer. I cannot, however, explain the nature of that prayer. It was one shower of tears from first to last, tears without a tincture of sweetness and flow-

* Psalm lxii. 25. † Psalm xxi. 15.

ing in a torrent. They seemed to proceed rather from my sensual nature than from God. Now more than ever I was become convinced it was God's will that I should bear the cross interiorly and exteriorly, and that for me joy was over for ever. When I tried to console myself by saying: even this is matter for joy, for this my present state can be no offence to God—even then hope seemed to die within me. Methought all my works were overlaid with evil, my whole being a prey to self-love and self-seeking, and that my whole nature was infected. I tried to animate myself with trust in the mercy of God, and I utterly failed in the attempt. For I saw how delusive it must be to promise myself the presence of such hope at the hour of death, if it be not the gift direct of God Himself. I then determined to place my heart in the hands of God, like the heart of wax mentioned above, to be moulded at His will; but in this effort too I seemed to fail; all I could do was to reflect what must

have been the sufferings endured for me upon the Cross, when the imposition of so small a part on me was the cause of so much terror to my soul. I found some comfort in these words of the Apostle St. Paul, "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross"—*Cum Christo confixus sum cruci.** I think I should be content to be nailed to the Cross were I there with Christ. It then, however, occurred to me, that Christ would not remain beside me, or that if He did (according to the saying, "I am with Him in tribulation"—*Cum ipso sum in tribulatione*"),† He would remain hidden and concealed, so that I might receive no consolation from His presence. Thus every prayer I offered up seemed distasteful to God; so I began repeating the *Pater Noster*, under the notion that this prayer, having been dictated by Himself, could not fail to please. Over and over again I said the words *fiat voluntas tua*, in order to animate myself to suffer and be strong under the

* Gal. ii. 19. † Psalm xc. 15.

inflictions of His providence, and as my prayer ended I felt that it was granted. I had also recourse to the most Blessed Virgin, and methought she replied to me, that I must have patience, and suffer somewhat, but that in times of great trial I should turn to her, and bear in mind her own great sufferings at the foot of the Cross. I then, as is my invariable practice after prayer, invoked the holy angels, and methought they replied to me, that as I had corresponded so ill with God under a lenient treatment, it was now fitting that I should try the efficacy of the way of mortification. Thus then the Cross was, I thought, offered to my acceptance on every side. In all my prayers I am wont to reason a little; but on the present occasion I was unable to reason at all, and therefore perhaps I ought not to have recorded these notes, as they do not contain any special light, but I have done so, as they may be of use at some future time.

46. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd"—*Aruit tamquam testa virtus mea.** I considered that these words described the condition of some broken piece of pottery unable now to produce the smallest blade of grass (which it might have done before the clay had been fashioned by the potter's hand), stript of all strength and life, and liable by a single blow to be shivered to atoms, in fine, good for nothing but to be cast upon the dung-hill. To such a state Christ says He reduced Himself in His Passion; to such a state also should I reduce myself. I still continue a prey to the dryness and desolation of yesterday, though more calm and weeping less. I know not how the hour passed so quickly as it has done, and this I take to be a proof that I was soothed during my sufferings, though I was insensible of the fact.

47. "And my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws"—*Et lingua mea adhæsit*

* Psalm xxi. 16.

*faucibus meis.** During this prayer I resolved to learn how to steel myself against grieving for misfortunes, and how to abstain from asking or seeking for any favour, and to endure in silence. I think this prayer turned out to be troubled by reason of the preceding ones, that is to say, because I had been trying to reject all consolation at the very time of its visit. And as according to my belief, no inquietude is sent by God (except by way of sufferance), I came to the conclusion that this frame of mind is not good; but that we ought—after making our protest to God that we do not intend to serve Him for the sake of His consolations, and that we continue to serve Him with equal ardour and affection though He should withhold them—to accept readily from His hands all His favours, whether consolation or desolation, and cheerfully thank Him in all humility, without regarding them as an end, but as the means of animating us

* Psalm xxi. 16.

to go forward in the divine service. If the rejection of gifts proffered by a lord of this world would be considered disrespectful, what must it be when the gifts proceed from our heavenly Lord, who in bestowing His favours makes us worthy to receive them, a thing no lord of this world can achieve? Hence it is that the self-abasement which I practised on those previous occasions (though it is so necessary) ended in disquiet and pain, inasmuch as I fear it has been the result of self-love which sought by this artifice to obtain an increase of divine gifts, and almost to snatch them by force in greater abundance from the hand of God. If I set about struggling against my yearnings they are more subtle than I. I endeavoured therefore to calm myself in the presence of God, seeking self-abasement in the reflection that I knew not truly how to humble myself, and I resolved to proceed in future with less of reflection on myself, and to intrust myself wholly to God, and

to accept from His hands whatever He thinks best to give. I thought that this counsel came from Himself, and I therefore resolved that my tongue should be hushed from hindering suffering, hushed from begging favours, but not hushed from thanksgiving, nor hushed from accepting His royal gifts.

APPENDIX.

[This and the following sections are from letters to friends.]

48. The prayer of this morning was spent on those words of the Psalm which affected me: "They parted My garments amongst them"—*diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea.** And the light given to me was that we look for His goods, but not for Himself. If there be something to be obtained from Christ to

* Psalm xxi. 19.

serve our turn, our convenience, or our interest, many there are who run emulously to have their share. But who is there that desires Him naked on the Cross? But how? Do we wish to make a partition amongst us, when we can every one possess Him wholly in His entirety! Ah, my God, that I speak and cannot act! In truth, however, methinks I care not for the garments of Christ which cover the body. In the same manner I think it but a small matter to quit all external things for His sake, friends, praise, amusements, and the like. But those thoughts which belong to the soul, which adorn, comfort, and enrich it (I mean spiritual consolations), I find more difficult to renounce. But still even these, or at least the affection to them, must he renounce who desires God alone.

49. I blush to tell you that I am but beginning; for no thought causes me more confusion than that I should now, after

the completion yesterday* of twenty-three years of religious profession, be only beginning. Hence it is that of all the verses of David of which I have made some little use there is not one that so wounds or pierces me to the quick as the following: "I said, now have I begun"—*Ego dixi, nunc cœpi.* I did not of myself determine to practise these things,† but God showed me clearly that He willed it. May He grant me grace to do His will and not prove unfaithful, for I utterly distrust myself. Let not your reverence, therefore, fail to pray for me, for I am in great terror.

50. My dear Fathers, nothing remains for us to do but to serve God, to be fired with His love, and to fulfil His divine will in all things with equal joy. All else

* The 1st December, 1660.

† The five noticed in the Introduction—namely, poverty, retirement, prayer, penance, examen of conscience.

is mere falsehood. I sincerely confess that my only grief is that I have been unable up to the present to offer to God any the smallest proof of genuine love, inasmuch as I know not whether I love Him for His own sake or for the favours He bestows.

51. My hope at present is founded on the infallible efficacy of prayer to obtain whatever we ask that is certainly for our good. Oh! what an assurance was that of Christ: "Ask and you shall receive" —*Petite et accipietis.* Could the promise be more clear, more universal, or less subject to exception? The only condition attached is that we should keep on asking. What labour ought we not to encounter in order to obtain so great a good? And yet we have only to ask God, through the merits of His Son, that we may become His servants and friends in very truth, and then leave ourselves in His hands, as He knows how to find the means. For my part, I am resolved,

with His grace, to thunder in His ears, and to knock, until I become importunate. The knowledge of my own misery, my poverty and want of all merit, should not discourage me; for I come as a mendicant to ask alms of Almighty God; and know we not that mendicants require not merits, as hirelings, servants, and the like do, in order to win their bread? Misery alone is the merit of the poor man, and the greater the misery the greater the reason for granting relief. Whatever happens, Christ cannot retract; He has promised that whosoever asks perseveringly in His name shall be heard. If we are constant the thing is done. "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayers, nor His mercy from me," said David. St. Augustine, commenting on these words, says, "When you see your prayer not turned away, doubt not His mercy is not turned away." Therefore we are without excuse. Let us ask, let us importune, let us, so to say, be troublesome to God; but troublesome we can-

not be, as our importunity will but make us more dear to Him; and it is not he who asks that is troublesome to God, but he who will not ask, he who, like Achaz exclaims, "I will not ask"—*Non petam.*

52. I wish to communicate to you a practice laid down for himself by St. Augustine (as I lately read in Osorio) to be followed in addressing himself to Jesus Christ. One day of the week it takes one form, next day another, as I shall now describe, adhering more particularly to the forms which I have adopted for my own practice. His custom, then, was on Monday to treat with Him as Judge, on Tuesday as King, on Wednesday as Physician, on Thursday as Spouse, on Friday as Redeemer (including therein the remembrance of the Passion), on Saturday as Brother (including therein the remembrance of the Blessed Virgin), and on Sunday as glorified (therein including the remembrance of Paradise). Thus each day we treat with Him in prayer,

according to the foregoing headings, presenting ourselves to Him, sometimes as criminals, sometimes as subjects, sometimes as infirm, &c., and begging of Him graces and animating ourselves with affections suitable to each condition. By this means too we can easily manage to keep our minds during the remainder of the day united with God.

WORKS

BY

Fathers of the Society of Jesus.

AN HOUR BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT; or, with my Crucifix. With a Preface and Appendix by FATHER GALLWEY. Price 4d.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the Means of Acquiring it. By the Rev. FATHER NEPVEU. 8d.

THE HOLY HOUR, or the Intimate Union of the Soul with Jesus in His Agony in the Garden. Translated from the Italian by a Father of the Society of Jesus. With Preface by the Rev. A. WELD, S.J. Second Edition. Price 6d.

THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED PETER FAVRE, of the Society of Jesus; First Companion of St. Ignatius Loyola. From the Italian of FATHER GIUSEPPE BOERO, of the same Society. Containing also the "Memorial," or Spiritual Diary of the Blsssed Peter Favre. With Preface by Rev. H. J. COLERIDGE, S.J. 6s. 6d.

LIFE OF ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, by FATHER GENELLI. 6s.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER. By the Rev. H. J. COLERIDGE, S. J. Two Volumes. Price 18s.

THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED JOHN BERCHMANS. By the Rev. F. GOLDIE, S.J. 6s.

THE STORY OF ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA. Edited by Rev. J. H. COLERIDGE, S.J. 3s. 6d.

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Part I. "The Ministry of St. John the Baptist." By Rev. H. J. COLERIDGE, S.J. 6s. 6d.

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Part II. "The Preaching of the Beatitudes." By Rev. H. J. COLERIDGE, S.J. 6s. 6d.

THE HISTORY OF THE SACRED PASSION. By FATHER LUIS DE LA PALMA, of the Society of Jesus. Translated from the Spanish. With Preface by the Rev. H. J. COLERIDGE, S.J. Second Edition. 7s. 6d.

A HUNDRED MEDITATIONS ON THE LOVE OF GOD. By ROBERT SOUTHWELL, of the Society of Jesus, Priest and Martyr. An entirely original work, now first published. With portrait. Edited, with a Preface, by the Rev. J. MORRIS. Price 6s. 6d.

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR and for the Principal Feasts. By the Ven. FATHER NICHOLAS LANCICIUS, of the Society of Jesus. With Preface by the Rev. GEORGE PORTER. Price 6s. 6d.

MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE AND DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST for Every Day in the Year. By NICHOLAS AVANCINUS, S.J. With a Preface by the Rev. GEORGE PORTER, S.J. Two vols. Price 10s. 6d.

A SPIRITUAL COMPENDIUM, in which the Principal Difficulties in the Way of Perfection are Explained. By FATHER GASPAR DE LA FIGUERA, of the Society of Jesus. Translated from the Spanish by Mrs. R. BENNETT. Edited by the Rev. GEORGE PORTER. Price 4s. 6d.

THE VIRTUES OF BLESSED MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS. By FATHER FRANCIS ARIAS. With Preface by the Rev. GEORGE PORTER. Cloth, 2. 6d.

By the Rev. FATHER ANDERDON, S.J.

AFTERNOONS WITH THE SAINTS. Eighth edition. Cloth, 5s.

THE CHRISTIAN ÆSOP: with Fifty-one Illustrations from American designs. Ornamental cloth, 4s.; plain cloth, 2s. 6d.

ADVENTURES OF OWEN EVANS, the Catholic Crusoe. Illustrated. Sixth edition. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

IN THE SNOW; Tales of Mount St. Bernard. Fifth edition. 1s. 6d.; cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE TROUBLES OF OUR CATHOLIC FOREFATHERS related by themselves. Second Series. 1. The Life of Father William Weston. 2. The Fall of Anthony Tyrrell. By the Rev. JOHN MORRIS. Demy 8vo. Price 14s.

Ditto, First Series. By the same. Cloth 8vo. Price 10s. 6d.

THE LETTER-BOOKS OF SIR AMIAS POULET, Keeper of Mary Queen of Scots. Edited by the Rev. JOHN MORRIS. Demy 8vo. Price 10s. 6d.

THE CONDITION OF CATHOLICS UNDER JAMES I. By the same. Demy 8vo. Price 14s.

248.1
Se37
48142

SEGNERI, S. J., PAUL
AUTHOR

Sentimenti; or, Lights in Prayer.
TITLE

P. Gallwey, S. J. (Ed.).

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED
APR 21 1986	STORAGE - ~~CBPE~~ J. CZAINA DEPT 18271	APR 23 19

48142